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# Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies

## *A Biography of Sayyid ʿUthman (1822–1914)*

NICO J.G. KAPTEIN

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# Islam, Colonialism and the Modern Age in the Netherlands East Indies

*A Biography of Sayyid ʿUthman (1822–1914)*

*By*

Nico J.G. Kaptein

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*Cover illustration:* Sayyid ʻUthman with his royal decoration pinned to his gown. Source: *Weekblad voor Indië* 10, no. 47 (8 March 1914): 1124.

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# Acknowledgements

When I published my first article on Sayyid 'Uthman in 1997, I never intended to write a book about him. However, during my readings on the history of Islam in Indonesia, his name popped up regularly and having attended an interesting conference, entitled 'Yemeni-Hadramis in Southeast Asia: Identity maintenance or assimilation?' in Kuala Lumpur in August 2005, I decided to write his biography. Since then, interruptions aside, I have worked on the book that is now in the hands of the reader. Since 1997, I have given a number of lectures and published some separate papers on Sayyid 'Uthman and these materials have been integrated in this book; sometimes in a condensed form, sometimes longer and sometimes with a new approach. I refer to these earlier writings in the pertinent passages. In one case I have republished a large part of an article almost without changes, namely 'Grateful to the Dutch government: Sayyid 'Uthman and the Sarekat Islam in 1913,' which was originally published in *Islamic legitimacy in a plural Asia*, edited by Anthony Reid and Michael Gilsenan (London: Routledge, 2007). I thank Routledge for granting permission to reproduce this here.

The reason for the delay in finishing this book is that I was only able to work on it during the summer months, free from teaching and student supervision and the various large projects that I have managed over the years. Fortunately, three fellowships allowed me to devote myself fully to the writing of this book. The first fellowship was at the Asia Research Institute (ARI) of the National University of Singapore from October–December 2006. I thank the then director of ARI, Anthony Reid for this opportunity. From May–June 2009 I enjoyed a brief residence at the Zentrum Moderner Orient (ZMO) in Berlin, which enabled me again to make progress. I profited greatly from my stay at this wonderful institute and I am grateful to the director of ZMO, Ulrike Freitag for inviting me and for her intellectual input in my work. During a final fellowship from June–August 2012, I was able to finalize a complete draft of the book. I owed this to Vincent Houben of the Humboldt University. Due to his work as Southeast Asia consultant for the Berlin Graduate School Muslim Cultures and Societies he was entitled to appoint a research fellow at the school. I thank him for selecting me for this position, as well as the director of the school, Gudrun Krämer for accepting me. I look back with great pleasure on my stay in the school, where I experienced one of the most productive periods of my academic career.

In addition to this institutional support, I have been aided by a great number of individuals. I have mentioned each one of them in the pertinent passage

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in a footnote. However, I would like to thank a few individuals here; namely, Kees van Dijk, Huub de Jonge, Michael Laffan and Merle Ricklefs, each of whom took the trouble to reading the entire draft. I have benefited greatly from their expertise and experience and, thanks to them, I have been able to make a great number of improvements to the book.

The illustrations in this book all come from Leiden University Library, unless otherwise stated. I am grateful to the library for permitting me to reproduce some items of its wonderful collection here.

Furthermore, I would like to express my gratitude to the Leiden University Institute for Area Studies (LIAS) for providing me with the funds to copy edit the English of the final draft of this book, and to Anna Yeadell-Moore for performing this task in such a fine manner.

Finally, I would like to thank my wife Isabel for everything and much more, and it is to her that I dedicate this book.

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# Note on the Transliteration and the Dates

I have made use of many sources in Arabic and in Jawi (Malay in Arabic script) in this book. To spare the reader from irritation, especially the non-Arabists, I have kept the transliteration as simple as possible. Moreover, I thought it would be odd if words that are written in Arabic and Jawi in the same way, for instance, *nasiha,* were transliterated differently. This formed an additional reason to choose for an uncomplicated transliteration.

For transliterating the Arabic I have used the system of *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. Three.* Leiden: Brill, 2007–, albeit without employing the dots to indicate emphatic letters or the signs to indicate a long vowel. For the Jawi texts I used the standard Indonesian orthography. Where the sources themselves use transliterated words or sentences, as a matter of course, I have not adjusted this and retained the original spelling.

Many of the primary sources referred to in this book use the Muslim calendar to indicate a particular date. In most cases I have converted these dates to their Common Era equivalents and skipped the original *hijri* date, where the original date is not of particular importance. For example, when a particular date is given as 21 Rajab 1306, I have not presented this as 21 Rajab 1306/ 23 March 1889, or as 23 March 1889, but simply as 1889, unless the more precise date is relevant. I trust that this has furthered the readability of the book. Moreover, the use of the Common Era calendar fits the colonial context of the narrative and makes a comparison with other historical events easier. In the bibliography, however, when a particular writing used the Muslim calendar I have referred to the *hijri* date (followed by my conversion to the Common Era).

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# List of Abbreviations

| | |
|---|---|
| E.I. (2) | *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. New Edition.* 11 vols. and 1 supplement vol. Leiden: Brill, 1954–2004. |
| E.I. (3) | *The Encyclopaedia of Islam. Three.* Leiden: Brill, 2007–. |
| ENI | *Encyclopaedie van Nederlandsch-Indië. Tweede druk*. 4 vols. and 4 supplement vols. 's-Gravenhage: Nijhoff, 1917–1939. |
| GAL | C. Brockelmann. *Geschichte der arabischen Litteratur*. *Zweite den Supplementbänden angepasste Auflage*. 2 vols. and 3 supplement vols. Leiden: Brill, 1943–1949. |
| KITLV | Royal Netherlands Institute of Southeast Asian and Caribbean Studies. |
| *Qamar al-zaman* | Shaykh ibn ʿAlwi. *Qamar al-zaman menyatakan keadaannya al-marhum al-Habib ʿUthman dan ta'rikhnya.* Weltevreden: ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman, 1343/1924. |
| *Suluh zaman* | ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUthman. *Suluh zaman ada menceritakan hal keadaan almarhum Sayyid ʿUthman dari masa diberanakkan hingga pulang ke rahmat Allah*. Batavia: ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUthman, no date. |

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# Introduction

## 1 Introduction

This book deals with the well-known Muslim scholar Sayyid ʿUthman ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAqil ibn Yahya al-ʿAlawi of Batavia (1822–1914) who was one of the most prominent Islamic scholars from the Netherlands East Indies. As his name suggests, Sayyid ʿUthman was a so-called *sayyid*, an honorific title given to descendants of the Prophet Muhammad. In this capacity, he belonged to the religious elite, which was – and in some circles still is – held in high esteem in the Muslim world at large, including in the Netherlands East Indies. Moreover, he formed part of the Hadrami diaspora, which had spread from the sixteenth century onwards from Hadramaut in the southern part of the Arabian Peninsula to the entire area around the Indian Ocean in East Africa, South India and the Malay-Indonesian Archipelago.

Born in Batavia in 1822, he spent from 1841 to 1862 in Mecca and in Hadramaut for study and to stay with the Hadrami branch of his family. In 1862, he returned to his native town, where he became active in preaching, teaching and publishing, and where he eventually 'returned to the Mercy of his Lord' in January 1914. From 1889, Sayyid ʿUthman became involved in Dutch Islamic policies as an informant of the colonial government and two years later he was officially appointed as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs, a position that he held until his death. In this capacity, Sayyid ʿUthman worked closely with the famous Dutch scholar of Islam and government advisor for Muslim affairs, C. Snouck Hurgronje (1857–1936) and, after the latter's return to the Netherlands in 1906, with his successors in the Office for Native Affairs.

Sayyid ʿUthman's involvement in the colonial administration, for which he received a monthly allowance, was considered controversial by many of his contemporaries, because Dutch rule in the colonies was often associated with Christianity and was evidently not Islamic, but infidel (*kafir*). This cooperation with the colonial government became even more provocative from the very end of the nineteenth century when anti-colonial sentiments in the Muslim world became more pronounced and also found their way to the Indies. This aspect of Sayyid ʿUthman's activities forms a major focus for this book; indeed, his attitude towards the Dutch colonial administration will form a recurring theme.

Although Sayyid ʿUthman is primarily known for his role in the colonial administration from 1889 onwards, it is noteworthy that he was 67 years old when he entered the service and had already had a long career in guiding the Muslim

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community in the Netherlands East Indies. As a religious scholar, Sayyid ʿUthman was particularly concerned with the advancement of proper Islamic teachings among the native Muslims in the Netherlands East Indies and throughout his career he devoted great efforts to promoting this. These efforts were made not only through teaching and preaching, but also through publishing. From 1869, Sayyid ʿUthman started to print his writings on his own lithographic press and a great number of items from his hand and printed on this press has been preserved.

Studying his life, we see him continuously working to combat what he considers to be the misunderstanding and wrong practice of Islam, and actively promoting its correct interpretation. Consequently, we gain an idea of what was important within Islam in the Netherlands East Indies in the period concerned. This becomes particularly interesting from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards – when Sayyid ʿUthman was already at the end of his 70s – when major new ideas about Islam started to penetrate Southeast Asia, largely as a result of the efforts of the Cairo-based reformists Muhammad ʿAbduh and Rashid Rida. As elsewhere, in this part of the world the new reformist way of thinking about Islam was contested by the established traditionalist discourse and gave rise to many debates. As a prominent representative of traditionalist discourse and a keen polemicist, Sayyid ʿUthman not only actively participated in these debates, but also became the object of discussion.

These various aspects of the life of Sayyid ʿUthman make him a fascinating figure from whom we can learn a great deal about the relationship between Islam and colonialism in the Dutch East Indies, Dutch colonial perceptions of Islam, Muslim perceptions of the Dutch and various other aspects of the history of Islam in the Netherlands East Indies, such as the nature of Islamic scholarship and the arrival of modernist Islamic thought from Egypt in the Indies.

## 2 Islam and Islamic Policy in the Netherlands East Indies

Two recent books have dealt with Islam in the Netherlands East Indies in the nineteenth century. The first, by Merle Ricklefs, demonstrates that Islamic reformist ideas emerged in Java from the 1850s onwards. This also affected the adherents of the syncretistic amalgam of Islam and local, often mystical, religious traditions, which Ricklefs has coined 'mystic synthesis.'[1] This is confirmed by Michael Laffan in his recent book *The makings of Indonesian Islam*, which

1 Ricklefs, *Polarising*, 252–258.

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shows, amongst other things, that due to the activities of independent teachers in the nineteenth century, Islam started to move away from its various local forms, as practiced in the courts, and made a closer connection to Meccan Islam.[2]

There was no scholarly centre for Islam in the Indies of the nineteenth century; this position was taken by Mecca. In fact, a so-called Jawa colony existed in the Holy City comprising a number of Muslim scholars who originated from the lands of Jawa, which in the Arabic language is the designation for Southeast Asia. These scholars had settled there permanently and sometimes never returned to their native country. They studied, taught and sometimes wrote books in the Holy City and they were visited by pilgrims from their native countries who sometimes stayed for shorter or longer periods to study under their guidance. Importantly, these teachers from the Jawa colony formed a chain in the transmission of Muslim knowledge from the heartlands of Islam to Southeast Asia. Sayyid ʻUthman had also studied in Mecca and made the acquaintance of Jawi[3] teachers there, including the famous Nawawi al-Bantani (1813–1897).

On the whole, the Islamic institutions in the Netherlands East Indies in the nineteenth century were modest. In terms of education, this was mainly concentrated in traditional Islamic boarding schools (*pesantrens*) in the countryside, while individual teachers were active on an informal basis. The position of Islamic law was subject to the *Regeeringsregelement* (Government Regulation) of 1854. According to article 75 of this regulation, the administrators of native law were permitted to apply the 'religious laws, institutions and customs of the natives, in so far as they are not in conflict with generally recognized principles of fairness and justice.'[4] In real terms, this meant that the scope of Islamic law was restricted to family law and inheritance law. A major event in the institutionalization of Islam in the Netherlands East Indies was the establishment of the Islamic Courts in 1882.

In the Netherlands East Indies in the nineteenth century there was no real coherent policy on Islam. Most measures related to Islam were based on a fear of religiously inspired contestations of the colonial order; consequently, contacts with the Middle East, which was regarded as a hotbed of Islamic fanaticism, were frustrated. For instance, pilgrimage to Mecca was discouraged using all kinds of measures that impeded travel to Arabia. However, there was a growing awareness in government circles that policies related to Islam should

2 Laffan, *The makings*, 40–64.

3 This is the adjectival form of Jawa.

4 Sonius, '*Introduction*,' lviii.

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be based on knowledge. Subsequently, we see that from 1871 onwards the Dutch planter Karel Frederik Holle (1829–1896), who held the position of Honorary Advisor for Native Affairs, was occasionally involved in Islamic affairs; while from 1878–1887, L.W.C. van den Berg (1845–1927) was active as Advisor for Eastern Languages and Muhammadan Law. In 1889, Snouck Hurgronje appeared on the scene and started to develop a consistent Islam policy for the first time.

'Snouck,' a frequently used abbreviation of his double surname, departed from the principle that the government should adopt a neutral position towards Islam – in line with the liberal tradition of the motherland – and divided Islam conceptually into two parts: a purely religious one and a political one. He believed that the government should remain aloof from religious matters. This stance meant that, for instance, the rules and regulations governing the pilgrimage to Mecca (*hajj*) were considerably liberalized under Snouck's influence, because he had categorized the pilgrimage as a religious phenomenon, in which the government should not interfere. Prior to Snouck's involvement in Islam policies, any returning pilgrim was looked upon as a potential revolutionary, but Snouck made clear that these *hajjis* did not necessarily pose a threat to the state and that repressive measures with regards to the pilgrimage to Mecca would only result in hostility and militancy. In a nutshell, Snouck believed that the Muslims of the Netherlands East Indies should be left unhindered to pursue their religious obligations. However, he took a different position as soon as Muslims began to engage in politics. In this domain, Snouck thought that the government should act resolutely to suppress all political aspirations of Islam, if necessary by military means, as indeed happened in the case of the Aceh war, in which Islamic notions played a prominent role.

Snouck's ideas on the place of Islam in society formed part of a new era in Dutch colonial policy, which was directed towards replacing the past colonial exploitation of the native population with a concern for the well-being of the people. This policy, which became known as the Ethical Policy, was officially inaugurated in Queen Wilhelmina's 1901 speech from the throne and was based on the idea that the Netherlands had a moral responsibility towards the indigenous population.[5] Towards the end of Sayyid 'Uthman's life these ethical policies started to change again, but the way they were understood and propagated by Snouck form the framework within which Sayyid 'Uthman's activities for the government took place.

5 Benda, 'Foundations.'

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## 3 The Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies

In this period, almost all Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies could trace their ancestry back to Hadramaut in South Yemen and they formed part of the Hadrami diaspora.[6] They hailed from different social strata, with the *sayyids*, the traditional religious elite, at the top. Most of these Arab immigrants were men who married local women and produced mixed race offspring: the so-called *muwallad* in Arabic or *peranakan* in Malay, although the latter term is used more to denote people of Indo-Chinese descent. Based on official colonial statistics, in 1883 there were a total of 10,888 Arabs on Java and Madura (including 1662 in Batavia), while a further 9,613 Arabs lived in the rest of the archipelago.[7] Although these immigrants and their offspring were limited in number, they exercised huge influence not only through trade – in Southeast Asia Arab traders were second in importance only to their Chinese counterparts – but also through the propagation of Islam beyond the traditional heartlands of the Muslim world. In general, the attitude of the Netherlands East Indies' indigenous population toward Arabs was ambivalent: while, on the one hand, they considered Arabs to be natural authorities in religious matters, they also often saw them as usurers.

Based on the Government Regulation of 1854, the Arabs were assigned the civil status of '*Vreemde Oosterlingen*' (Foreign Orientals), which set the Arabs apart from the two other legal categories in the Regulation, the Europeans and the natives. A different administration of justice applied to all three categories. This manifested itself in, amongst other things, the so-called pass and quarter system, which obliged the Arabs to live together in designated town quarters and to request a formal pass from the authorities if they wanted to travel outside their town of residence. This system enabled the colonial authorities to watch the movements of the Arabs and to restrict their mobility. Indeed, this was precisely the goal of colonial authorities who saw Arabs as potential adherents of the Pan-Islamist ideology that was undermining colonial rule by aiming to unite the world's Muslims under the banner of the Ottoman Sultan.

This colonial fear was strengthened by the fact that members of the Hadrami diaspora maintained close ties with their native region: by sending children born in the Netherlands East Indies back to Hadramaut for schooling; by

6 In 1995 William Clarence-Smith and Ulrike Freitag organized a seminal international conference on the Hadrami diaspora around the Indian Ocean at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) in London. Subsequently, there has been huge academic output relating to this diaspora. See for Southeast Asia, Saparudin and Abdul Samad, *Bibliography*.

7 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 105–109.

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cherishing their Arabic language; and, by sending money back to their families in Hadramaut. Moreover, due to their stricter adherence to Islamic prescriptions than the native population, the government also regarded the Arabs as religious fanatics. All in all, the colonial fear and distrust with regard to the Arabs in the Indies can be summed up in a single word: Arabophobia.

Many of these characteristics and colonial stereotypes assigned to the Arabs played a role in the life of Sayyid ʿUthman and will emerge in this book.

## 4 The Sources

The sources for this book are of a diverse nature and are written in a variety of languages. For the initial period of the life of Sayyid ʿUthman the sources are limited, but after he started to print his writings, from 1869 onwards, and after he had gained prominence as a religious teacher, and in particular after he had entered the colonial administration, the sources become more abundant.

The most complete sources for the youth and the formative period of Sayyid ʿUthman's life are two closely related Malay biographical accounts, which originate from his immediate family and were written shortly after Sayyid ʿUthman passed away.

In addition, the many works that were written and printed by Sayyid ʿUthman himself constitute important sources for this book. Sometimes these works are written in Arabic and sometimes in Malay, depending on the audience that Sayyid ʿUthman was addressing. It should be noted that many works bear Arabic titles, even those in Malay. Some of his writings take the form of a large book, while others are short pamphlets that cover only a few pages. Taken together, the number of all these different items reaches more than 150. These works deal with all branches of Islamic scholarship, discussing dogmatics, Islamic jurisprudence (*fiqh*), mysticism, the Prophetic tradition (Hadith), Qur'an recitation, ethics, Islamic brotherhoods, heresies, inheritance law, religious administration, Arabic grammar, lexicology, and astronomy. Most of these publications are available in Leiden University Library, where they entered the collection as a bequest by C. Snouck Hurgronje who donated his personal library upon his death in 1936. These writings are often conventional Muslim works, but in the course of my research it appeared that they were often related to a particular historical event, even if this is not initially evident. The writings of Sayyid ʿUthman, therefore, not only contain information about his own views and preoccupations, but also give insight into the wider social and historical context.

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In addition to his writings that were intended for publication, a limited number of Sayyid ʿUthman's personal letters remain. The majority of these are sixteen letters addressed to C. Snouck Hurgronje. Interestingly, these letters were not only written in the period that Snouck Hurgronje lived in the Netherland East Indies (1889–1906), but also before and after. In addition to these letters to Snouck, a number of others have also been preserved; for instance, those written to the Leiden-based professor of Arabic M.J. de Goeje (1836–1909), the Bandung-based *penghulu* Haji Hasan Mustafa (1852–1930), Sayyid ʿUthman's teacher in Mecca, Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan (1817–1886), as well as some letters to a number of *sayyids* in Palembang and to his grandson Muhammad ibn Hashim (1883–1960).

Another source for the life of Sayyid ʿUthman consists of reactions to his writings and his activities by his Muslim contemporaries. These reactions range from direct polemics between Sayyid ʿUthman and others – for example, the dispute with the Mecca-based scholar of Sumatran origin, Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi (1860–1916) – to comments on his works published in the Egyptian reformist journal *al-Manar*, which was managed by Rashid Rida (1865–1935). In addition, indigenous newspapers and magazines occasionally comment upon Sayyid ʿUthman's activities.

Colonial sources constitute another interesting category. Firstly, the materials that result from the Dutch colonial bureaucracy, like the pieces of advice to the colonial administration given by Snouck Hurgronje, and materials kept in the National Archives in Jakarta. Secondly, the Dutch language colonial newspapers, like the *Java-Bode* and the *Locomotief*, at times provided me with relevant information. In the course of my research, a number of these colonial newspapers were digitalized by the Royal Library in The Hague and this made the research easier.[8] Moreover, a variety of other materials from the colonial era were used.

Finally, I was privileged to receive information from a number of the descendants of Sayyid ʿUthman, notably his great-grandson the late Sayyid M.A. Alaydrus (d. 2007) from Jatinegara, Jakarta, through a series of interviews in Indonesia.

## 5 Previous Research and This Book

Anyone interested in the history of Islam in Indonesia will, sooner of later, come across Sayyid ʿUthman and in many writings on Islam in the archipelago

8 www.kranten.kb.nl.

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Sayyid ʿUthman pops up. Moreover, a number of contemporary scholars have devoted separate publications to the man. An interesting preliminary overview of Sayyid ʿUthman's life was published in 1995 by the prominent Indonesian historian Azyumardi Azra.[9] This publication takes the form of an article and is necessarily short. The piece relates the main facts of his life and gives particular attention to his views on Holy War, in response to the revolt that had taken place in Banten, also known as the Cilegon affair. A second article to be mentioned here was published by Amiq[10] and also focuses on Sayyid ʿUthman's view on *jihad*. In addition to these two articles, two doctoral dissertations on the work of Sayyid ʿUthman have appeared in Indonesia, in 2008 and in 2011, respectively. The first of these is the work by Muhammad Noupal who investigated Sayyid ʿUthman as a religious thinker in the fields of creed, jurisprudence and mysticism, and concluded that he was primarily concerned with keeping the Muslim community away from thoughts that were not in line with the Shariʿa.[11] The second dissertation was written by Ahwan Fanani,[12] who studied the work of Sayyid ʿUthman from the vantage point of interreligious *fiqh* and with an interest in conflict management. He concluded that the underlying principles for this in the work of Sayyid ʿUthman are safety (*aman*) and public good (*maslaha*). Both dissertations have their value, but focus more on Sayyid ʿUthman as a religious thinker than on the colonial context of his life and work, which is my centre of attention in this book. My own studies on Sayyid ʿUthman go back to 1993 when I published a first article on him and in the present work I have integrated most of these previous writings on Sayyid ʿUthman.

The focus of this book will be the question of how Sayyid ʿUthman viewed the place of Islam in the colonial state. Fortunately, we have ample information on this, both from the period prior to him being on the colonial payroll, as well as from the period thereafter. Therefore, we can answer this question for both periods and make a comparison of his ideas on this issue from both phases in his career. Subsidiary research questions are: What did Sayyid ʿUthman think of Western civilization? How did he perceive his own position as a servant to the colonial administration? What was the relationship between Say-

9 Azra, 'Hadrâmî scholars.' A slightly shorter version of this article also appeared: Azra, 'Sayyid ʿUthman.'

10 Amiq, 'Two fatwas.' This article is based on his Leiden MA thesis, which he prepared under my supervision in 1998.

11 Noupal, 'Pemikiran keagamaan.'

12 Fanani, 'Fikih hubungan.' I thank Abdul Djamil (Semarang) for sending me a copy of this book.

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yid ʿUthman and Snouck Hurgronje? And, what do his many books tell us about the specific Dutch East Indian context in which they were written?

## 6 The Organization of This Book

This book is divided into three main parts, which take an ever increasing distance to the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, starting in Part One with a view on his life 'from within,' via a historical study of his life and work in Part Two, to Part Three which evaluates his career 'from without' and which returns, in a systematic way, to the research themes and questions just mentioned.

Part One consists of one chapter and investigates and translates a source 'from within.' This text is in Malay and is a so-called *sya'ir*, a poem, composed by Shaykh ibn ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman ibn Yahya, a grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman. Finished on 19 November 1924, so about ten years after the death of Sayyid ʿUthman, it is entitled *Qamar al-zaman menyatakan keadaannya almarhum al-Habib ʿUthman dan ta'rikhnya*, 'The moon of the era: A description of the life of the late Habib[13] ʿUthman and his times' and relates the entire life of Sayyid ʿUthman from his birth until his death in 1914. This text forms an excellent introduction to the biography of Sayyid ʿUthman, not only as a result of its informative character, but also because it gives a picture of how his contemporaries saw him and judged him.

In Part Two, I deal with the life and work of Sayyid ʿUthman on the basis of the available sources in a rough chronological order. Chapter Two will discuss the period from his birth in Batavia in 1822 until the year 1862, when he ended his extended stay in the Middle East and returned to his native city. Chapter Three will deal with his activities in Batavia as a scholar and a publisher until around 1885, when Sayyid ʿUthman became the object of debate in governments circles. Chapter Four explains how, in spite of colonial stereotypes about Arabs, Sayyid ʿUthman entered the service of the administration and, two years later, was appointed as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs. The chapter will focus on Sayyid ʿUthman's cooperation with the Advisor for Native Affairs C. Snouck Hurgronje and his work for the administration, leaving his other activities for Chapter Seven. The time span of this chapter is roughly from 1885 to 1906, the year in which Snouck Hurgronje returned to the Netherlands for good. Chapter Five falls within the period dealt with in the previous chapter, but is treated separately, because of the importance of the topic, namely the

13 Habib is the title of address for a *sayyid*, prevalent among member of the Hadrami diaspora.

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rise of Pan-Islamist thought in the Indies and the attacks on Sayyid ʿUthman this brought. Chapter Six deals with another major episode, not only in the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, but also in the history of Islam in Indonesia; namely, the introduction of reformist ideas from Egypt and the debates this brought about between followers of this new school of thought and the adherents of the traditional way of Islamic thinking. Although by this time Sayyid ʿUthman was already in his eighties, he was the most prominent spokesman for traditional Islam from the Indies and he participated at the highest level in this transnational debate. Chapter Seven deals with Sayyid ʿUthman's publications, which were not particularly linked to the major themes dealt with in Chapters Four, Five and Six. In fact, alongside and simultaneously with writings related to these major issues, Sayyid ʿUthman continued to produce publications that were relevant to the religious guidance of the Muslim population. For the sake of completeness, these materials have also been included in this biography and form the focus of this chapter. This chapter deviates from the chronological order followed thus far, and deals roughly with the period between 1891, when Sayyid ʿUthman was officially appointed as Advisor, and 1913, the year that forms the object of the last chapter. Chapter Eight is the last chapter of Part Two of this book and deals with the final year of Sayyid ʿUthman's life, 1913. This year saw the rise of the first Indonesian mass movement, Sarekat Islam. Although Sayyid ʿUthman was already in his nineties, he fully participated in the debates about this new organization and this, amongst other issues, forms the basis of this chapter. In addition, this chapter also relates his final activities and his death in January 1914.

Having given a 'view from within' in Part One, and having related the life story of Sayyid ʿUthman in Part Two, to conclude this book, Part Three goes into the themes and questions identified as the focus of my research in this introduction and provides an evaluation of his life and activities 'from without.'

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# PART 1

## *Sayyid ʿUthman: A View from Within*

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CHAPTER 1

# An Indigenous Biography: The *Qamar al-zaman*

## 1 Introduction

The most complete sources for the biography of Sayyid ʿUthman are two life stories in Malay, written shortly after he had passed away in 1914. These texts, entitled the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman*, respectively, deal with his life from birth until death and are very similar as far as their content is concerned. Both texts are closely related and originate from Sayyid ʿUthman's immediate family. The present chapter starts by providing information on the background and provenance of both texts and explains their relationship. In addition, I will present a full translation of the *Qamar al-zaman*, in order to give a view on the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, as perceived within his own milieu. This approach allows me to compare this 'view from within,' as I phrased it in the introduction, with the description of the life and work of Sayyid ʿUthman that I will present in the second part of this book, and which enables me to provide 'a view from without' on his biography in the third part of the book.

## 2 The *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman*

The older of the two texts is probably the *Suluh zaman*, the full title of which is *Suluh zaman ada menceritakan hal keadaan almarhum Sayyid ʿUthman dari masa diberanakkan hingga pulang ke rahmat Allah*, 'The torch of the era: The story of the life of the late Sayyid ʿUthman from his birth until his return to the Mercy of God.' This text is in prose, but on the back cover are five stanzas of poetry that appeal to the reader to follow the good example of the *mufti* Sayyid ʿUthman. The last stanza gives some information on the text itself and reads as follows:

> This story has just been published
> Sayyid ʿAbd Allah is the one who published it
> it is for sale and has been printed in his printing office
> it is for sale for a low price.[1]

1 ini hikayat baharu terbitnya/Sayyid ʿAbd Alah yang mengeluarkannya/terjual dan tercetak di percetakannya/dijual pun dengan murah harganya.

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The *Suluh zaman* was written by Sayyid ʿAbd Allah, who was one of the sons of Sayyid ʿUthman.[2] The text is not dated, but may have been written before 1924; in any case it is older than the *Qamar al-zaman* that dates from that year.

The second biography of Sayyid ʿUthman is a poetic rendering of his life story, the full title of which reads *Qamar al-zaman menyatakan keadaannya al-marhum al-Habib ʿUthman dan ta'rikhnya*, 'The moon of the era: A description of the life of the Late Habib ʿUthman and his times.' This poem was published in a small lithographed booklet together with five religious admonitions, and is written in Malay using Jawi script. The title page states that the poem was composed by Shaykh ibn ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman ibn Yahya, meaning Shaykh *the son* of ʿAlwi, *the son* of ʿUthman ibn Yahya; that is to say, the grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman. Shaykh was the name of the second of the ten sons of ʿAlwi,[3] and ʿAlwi was the oldest son of Sayyid ʿUthman, who had been born in Hadramaut.[4] Moreover, the title page mentions that it was printed and sold in the shop owned by Sayyid ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman, located in Kampung Petamburan in Weltevreden. The final page of the booklet mentions that the writing was finished on 21 Rabiʿ al-thani 1343 (= 19 November 1924).

Thus, both the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* originate from the direct family of Sayyid ʿUthman. Of course, this closeness to the protagonist of the story could mean that any actions that shed a negative light on Sayyid ʿUthman might have been left out, but, on the other hand, it also guarantees a high degree of authenticity of the information provided. These works are not primarily concerned with providing factual information on the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, but both have a clear edifying dimension. As mentioned, the *Suluh zaman* appeals to readers to follow the good example set by Sayyid ʿUthman during his lifetime. By comparison, a wish is expressed on the title page of the *Qamar al-zaman* that the life story of Sayyid ʿUthman be an 'example for people of understanding' (Arabic *ʿibratan li-uli l-albab*, Qur'an 12: 111). Alongside the clearly edifying passages in both works, they also present solid information on various things, for instance, book titles, events, and individuals. Whenever it was possible to check these data against information from other sources, both texts have always proved to be reliable from a historical point of view. In

2 According to ʿAbd al-Qadir, *Genealogical chart*, he was the fourth son of Sayyid ʿUthman. Together with three other brothers, he signed the obituary of his father in the Padang journal *al-Munir*, see Chapter Eight.

3 ʿAbd al-Qadir, 'Genealogical chart.'

4 Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 105. Later we hear of his presence in Batavia, but it is not clear when ʿAlwi left Hadramaut for the Dutch East Indies. Perhaps he was taken as a child by his father to Batavia. See also Chapter Eight.

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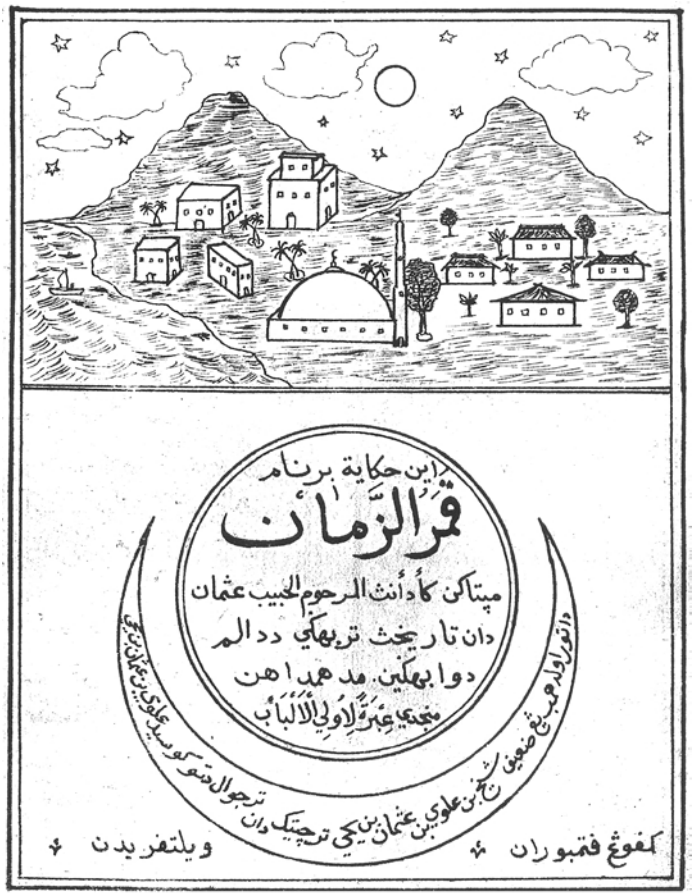


FIGURE 1 *Title page of the* Qamar al-zaman
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addition to these edifying aspects and this accurate historical data, there are other parts of the texts that are clearly inventions, notably, the accounts of some of Sayyid ʿUthman's travels. On the whole, however, the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* form historically valuable sources.

Sayyid ʿUthman's relatives undoubtedly published these two biographical texts, because they wanted to keep alive both his memory and the interest in his written legacy. Indeed, no less than nine of the books Sayyid ʿUthman wrote during his lifetime are mentioned and called attention to in these texts.[5] As we just saw, the *Suluh zaman* mentions that it could be purchased in the printing

5 Apart from the *Ihdaʾ al-fawaʾid* (stanza 165), all these texts have been preserved.

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establishment of Sayyid ʿAbd Allah, while on the back cover of the *Qamar al-zaman* there is an announcement that the books of Sayyid ʿUthman were for sale and instructions were given on how they could be ordered from Sayyid ʿAlwi's shop in Weltevreden. While this was common practice among booksellers,[6] it underlines that the publication of the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* was also designed to promote the sale of Sayyid ʿUthman's books and thus also had a clear commercial dimension.

Here, we touch upon an important issue, namely the continuation of Sayyid ʿUthman's printing establishment after his death in 1914. It is known that some years after the death of Sayyid ʿUthman, a quarrel arose within the family that had serious consequences for the family printing business. These developments are mentioned in an Arabic letter, dated Batavia, 25 August 1917, which Sayyid ʿUthman's son Sayyid Hasan sent to Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden asking for information on how to obtain Arabic books from libraries in Holland, in particular Leiden. In this letter he mentions that after Sayyid ʿUthman's death there was no one to take over the guidance of the family apart from the eldest son, ʿAlwi. But he did not deal well with the family's interests, and acted according to his personal whims without consulting the other sons. Consequently, Hasan, together with his youngest brother Hamid and an unnamed sister,[7] moved to Kampong Melayu Besar, Meester Cornelis, taking with them the fittings of the printing establishment including the inkwells. The first thing Hasan did was to reprint a number of his father's books and to establish the Bintang Bercahaya Press. Despite his lack of experience and expertise ('I am not a graduate of the *madrasa*, nor do I have the opportunity to ask for the help of my father or to be instructed by someone else'), Hasan was able to keep the business going, albeit with difficulty.[8] Although the issue is not altogether clear, it seems that these problems regarding the continuation of the printing business were complicated further by the fact that a third brother, Sayyid ʿAbd Allah, was also involved in printing in the decade after Sayyid ʿUthman's death, as the publication of the *Suluh zaman* shows. Moreover, a fourth brother, Sayyid Yahya, was active in the same field and published a sales catalogue of the writings of his deceased father in 1916 under an imprint of N.V. Handel-My.

6 Proudfoot, 'Booksellers,' 5.

7 The Arabic reads *baʿd l-karaʾim*, which can mean one sister or a few sisters.

8 Hasan ibn ʿUthman, 'Letter to C. Snouck Hurgronje, 25 August 1917.' The letterhead reads 'Sajid Hassan b. Oesman b. Jahja, Toko Bintang Bertjahaja, Kampong Melajoe Besar, Meester-Cornelis, Batavia.'

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Said Oesman, located in Petamburan, Weltevreden.[9] This information on the collapse of the press is confirmed in the memoirs of the Batavian born Arab Sayyid Abu Bakar ibn ʿAli ibn Abu Bakar Shahabuddin (1870–1944) who recalls that, upon his death, Sayyid ʿUthman left his printing office to his children. He expresses his regret that the children did not stick together, but rather divided the press amongst each other.[10]

We see, then, that a few years after the death of Sayyid ʿUthman four of his sons were active in printing and selling the works of their deceased father. I think that the publication of the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* should also be understood against the background of this commercial rivalry between different factions of the family, each with their own aspirations to play a part in the dissemination and selling of Sayyid ʿUthman's work. This rivalry also explains why within a short period of time two almost identical biographical accounts of Sayyid ʿUthman emerged from within one family.

## 3 The Relationship between the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman*

In order to further substantiate this point I will first go into the relationship between the *Suluh zaman* ('The Torch of the Era') and the *Qamar al-zaman* ('The Moon of the Era'). The *Suluh zaman* is slightly longer and contains slightly more details (but not about essential points) than the *Qamar al-zaman*, but both works are similar in terms of contents: the choice of words is very much the same, the structure of both works is completely the same: two main divisions, the first containing Sayyid ʿUthman's life before he resettled in Batavia in 1862, and the second presenting ten main events in Sayyid ʿUthman's life in ten subsections, followed by a conclusion that relates his death and funeral in 1914.

Comparison of both texts shows that the *Suluh zaman* is most likely the older of the two. The main argument for the *Qamar al-zaman* being the secondary text can be derived from the metaphoric representation of Sayyid ʿUthman in the title of both works, as torch and moon, respectively. A torch (Malay *suluh*), of course, spreads a lot of light, but the moon (Arabic *qamar*) surpasses this by far. We can conclude, therefore, that the 'The Moon of the Era' was clearly chosen to outshine the earlier 'The Torch of the Era.' An additional point might confirm this. In the *Suluh zaman* (p. 3) Sayyid ʿUthman's age when

9 Yahya ibn ʿUthman, *Sales catalogue*. Sayyid Yahya was still active as a publisher in 1923, see Kaptein, 'House of Orange.'

10 Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 105.

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he departed for Mecca is given as eighteen years old, while the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 14),[11] gives it as nineteen years of age. When we look into the (identical) dates given in both texts, i.e. birth in 1238 and departure for Mecca in 1257,[12] we see that the *Suluh zaman* is wrong here and that the *Qamar al-zaman* is right. Indeed, the *Qamar al-zaman* corrected the initial mistake in the *Suluh zaman* and, in doing so, confirms the latter as the older of the two.

The main difference is that the *Suluh zaman* is written in prose, while the *Qamar al-zaman* is a poem and, as such, is much more entertaining and is also suitable to be read out loud at gatherings and parties.[13] Furthermore, the *Qamar al-zaman* is more concerned with the literary effects of the text. A few examples might suffice. Dealing with opponents of Sayyid ʿUthman, the *Suluh zaman* (p. 12) mentions that they had little knowledge of Islam, while the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 124) mentions that they '[…] could barely read the *alif, ba', ta', tha'*,' which are the first four letters of the Arabic alphabet. This last formulation is, of course, much more caustic and, indeed, other places in the *Qamar al-zaman* are similarly appealing to the audience, more so than the *Suluh zaman*. Furthermore, the *Qamar al-zaman* is more concerned with the dramatic effects of particular actions. At the point in the *Suluh zaman* (pp. 9–10) that mentions a particular imposter being handed over to the police, the parallel passages of the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanzas 93; 101) elaborate the incident by adding a punishment in order to satisfy the intended audience, be it a listener or a reader. Finally, the *Qamar al-zaman* has greater literary pretensions than the *Suluh zaman*, as demonstrated by the embellishment of certain descriptions, e.g. in stanza 140, where a particular book of Sayyid ʿUthman is compared to a shining lamp; or the addition of a parable based on the Qur'an in stanzas 153–155.

As mentioned, both the *Qamar al-zaman* and the *Suluh zaman* draw attention to the fact that they are for sale and, in particular, the *Qamar al-zaman* is keen to explain how the books of Sayyid ʿUthman that are in stock can be ordered. For this reason, the poem can perhaps also be read as a lengthy advertisement, designed to promote the books of Sayyid ʿUthman that ʿAlwi printed and had in stock. By publishing the *Qamar al-zaman* and by reworking and

11 For the sake of easy reference throughout this book I have numbered the stanzas of the *Qamar al-zaman*.

12 The Islamic (lunar) calendar is given throughout both texts, and Sayyid ʿUthman was thus 19 lunar years old.

13 The late Mr. M.A. Alaydrus remembered that his grandmother Khadija (circa 1871–1974; the daughter of Sayyid ʿUthman) used to read the poem at family gatherings, around 1940, when he was a child. Letter to the author, February 2007.

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outshining the *Suluh zaman*, Sayyid ʿAlwi underlined that he had more rights than his brother ʿAbd Allah to continue to publish the legacy of his late father, and to any profits that ensued.

In short, it can be said that the comparison between the two texts shows that the *Qamar al-zaman* is more literary and more entertaining, and at the same time is just as accurate as the *Suluh zaman*. In what follows, I provide a full translation of the *Qamar al-zaman*. By doing so, we get an overview of the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, as remembered by his family. Undoubtedly, the text was based on stories told by Sayyid ʿUthman to his offspring and, for this reason, it presents a picture of his life that both he and his family wanted to portray. Before I present this translation, I will give some introductory remarks on the language and the form of the *Qamar al-zaman.*

## 4 The *Qamar al-zaman*: Language and Form

The *Qamar al-zaman* consists of 201 stanzas, plus a title page and a concluding line, printed on 23 pages. As indicated on the title page, the text is divided into two main parts: the first dealing with Sayyid ʿUthman's life prior to his definite settlement in Batavia in 1862 and his rise to prominence in that city (stanza 1–70); and the second part (stanza 71–201) dealing with the rest of his life, and subdivided into ten 'tribulations' (*bencana*) faced by the Sayyid during his lifetime.

The *Qamar al-zaman* is composed in the Malay language and written in the Arabic script, called Jawi. The text is composed as a *sya'ir*, literally 'poem,' which is the most popular form of Malay poetic expression. The *sya'ir* consists of a number of stanzas, each of four lines, with a rhyming scheme of a-a-a-a. This form can affect the spelling of the Malay text, since every line has to end in the same letter; sometimes final letters of words that are found in standard Malay dictionaries are omitted, in order to make the rhyme work, e.g. the standard spelling *boleh* becomes *bole*. Whether or not a number of these spellings should be regarded as a specific type of Malay or are merely a matter of rhyme is an issue that falls beyond the scope of this introduction as well as beyond my expertise. Likewise, the syntax of the text can be affected by the *sya'ir* form, because often the separate lines do not form perfect syntactic entities, the composer of the text being more interested in the expressive and prosodic effects of the poem than in correct grammar.

A striking feature of the Malay used in this text is the occurrence of many foreign words, in particular from the Arabic, which is not surprising in the light of the ethnic background and the religious nature of the protagonist. Of course,

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many of these Arabic words have been incorporated in everyday Malay, but others not (e.g. *ta'anni*, stanza 199). Furthermore, the text contains several Sundanese (*raksa*, stanza 50*; borang*, stanza 176), Javanese (*dalang*, stanza 111), English (*scout*, stanza 93) and Dutch words (*rente*, stanza 138). All in all, the vocabulary clearly points to the cosmopolitan milieu of Batavia, where the poem was written.

In the translation I have tried to stay close to the text and I have deliberately not tried to improve the translation in terms of the syntax of the text. On the other hand, the translation does not try to convey the particular stylistic features of the Malay, such as rhythm or rhyme.

## 5 The *Qamar al-zaman*: Translation[14]

[Title page][15]

This story is entitled 'The Moon of the Era: A description of the life of the late Habib 'Uthman and his times.' It is divided into two parts. May it be an 'example for people of understanding.'[16] It was composed by the humble servant Shaykh ibn 'Alwi ibn 'Uthman ibn Yahya. It was printed and is for sale in the shop of Sayyid 'Alwi ibn 'Uthman, Kampung Petamburan, Weltevreden.

[page 2]

In the Name of God, the Merciful, the Compassionate

1[17] In the name of the Only God
this poem is now being written.
The author is not able to do this
except with the help of the Almighty.

2 Many of his verses are awkward
like sugarcane from the region of Tegal.

14 For readers who have a command of Malay, but do not have the ability to read Jawi I have given a transliteration of the Jawi text in the Appendix, so that readers can consult the Malay text. I would like to thank Datuk Salleh Yaapar, Universiti Sains Malaysia and Jullian Millie, Monash University, Australia for generously sharing their great knowledge of the Malay language with me in preparing this translation and transliteration. Of course, all remaining misinterpretations are mine.

15 The page numbers of the original Malay text are given in square brackets.

16 This quotation is in Arabic and taken from Qur'an 12: 111.

17 The numbers of the stanzas are not mentioned in the text and are mine.

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Fragmented into too many sections,
suck out the syrup and the rest is dregs.

3 'The Moon of the Era' is the name of this story
in order to enlighten all brethren
of the affairs of the deceased, who has now passed on,
and returned to the Mercy of the Beneficent Lord.

4 At this point I will begin to relate
the life of the deceased, to make it clear
to all brethren without exception
so they may know it and take heed.

5 The one intended by the word 'the deceased'
is Habib 'Uthman, who has passed away.
Let this be known to all brethren
who may find pleasure in reading this story.

6 In the year 1238 [1822][18]
the deceased was born in the front part of Pekojan
in the bustling city of Batavia
to where all races come in their boats.

[page 3]
7 His father was 'Abd Allah ibn 'Aqil ibn Yahya.
He was born in the Noble City
known as Mecca, the Venerated,
the birthplace of the Lord of the Prophets.

8 Likewise with his grandfather,
he was also born in Mecca.
His name was 'Aqil ibn 'Umar.
This 'Umar originated from Hadramaut.

9 His beautiful mother, now deceased,
was Amina, daughter of 'Abd al-Rahman al-Misri.
Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman arrived here from Egypt
propagating knowledge all around the country.

18 For the sake of convenience, I have added the Common Era years in square brackets after the years of the Muslim calendar used in the text.

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10 After the deceased was born,
three years later, they say,
his father returned home
to the city of Mecca to visit his family.

11 From then on the deceased was cared for
in full well-being by his grandfather.
Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahman was Egyptian.
His knowledge was beyond measure.[19]

12 The deceased sought knowledge from him,
night and day without stopping.
Various disciplines were taught to him.
The deceased was fortunate to receive his legacy.

13 The deceased went to others than him,
seeking knowledge morning and evening.
From the best of the Malay scholars
he obtained various kinds of knowledge.

14 When he was nineteen years old
the deceased asked for his grandfather's permission
to go to Mecca to follow his father,
wishing to complete his Islam.

15 He asked for permission a number of times
from his grandfather, the noble man.
He got permission along with provisions,
everything he needed, all together.

16 The deceased then set sail,
fixed on the city of Mecca.[20]
There he would meet his father
and all the family, one by one.

19 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers was his grandfather Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahman.

20 A note in the margin mentions: the year 1257 (= 1841).

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[page 4]

17 After he reached the city of Mecca
he stayed with his father, morning and evening.
Day after day he studied
the different sciences he was seeking.[21]

18 After seven years had gone by
since the deceased had joined his family,
a desire rose in his heart
to seek leave of his father.

19 He then put this into action,
asking permission as well as blessing
from his father and all his family
to go to Hadramaut as he had planned.

20 After obtaining this from his father
the deceased arose and went to prepare
and then set out in good cheer.
His destination was the land of Hadramaut.

21 The time at which this took place
was the year 1264 [1847] to be exact.
The deceased sailed at that time
wholly relying on the Only God.

22 After reaching Hadramaut
a crowd was waiting to receive him,
with commotion on the left and right.
We need not mention this happiness further.

23 The deceased met with several '*ulama*',
experts in Shari'a and the Essence in Religion,
*sayyid*s as well as *shaykh*s,
the eternal beacons of religion.

24 The deceased was happy
to sit and study any time of the day.

21 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers in Mecca was Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan.

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Naturally he did this day and night,
getting what he wanted, bit by bit.

25 Until there came a time predestined
by Almighty God who created
and determines the entire universe;
the deceased's marriage was celebrated.

26 As a signal from his teachers,
the marriage took place in a perfect manner.
He was happy and content
from the knowledge and sophistication he had acquired.

[page 5]
27 A number of children eventuated.
They prospered in the land of Hadramaut.
In such intimacy his heart was happy,
living in peace, free of suffering.

28 Then at a certain time
his dedicated teachers died.[22]
These had constantly given him instruction.
The heart of the deceased became sad.

29 After the death of his teachers
the deceased dwelt in grief,
he thought of his teachers every day.
Then an idea came into his heart.

30 He wished to travel to soothe his heart,
to Mecca, Medina and similar places,
while seeking knowledge and understanding.
Hopefully he would succeed in all of these.

31 After a period of eight years
residing in Hadramaut in peace,

22 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers in Hadramaut was al-Habib 'Abd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir.

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he hardened his resolve,
wishing only to fulfil his aspiration.

32 At that time he then set out
for both Mecca and Medina,[23]
at the same time seeking religious knowledge
and making visits[24] to his ancestors.

33 Most important was to visit the Lord of Mankind[25]
who intercedes for his people on the Day of Gathering,
who owns the river of Kauthar[26]
and loves his people, small and great.

34 And so it was that at that time,
being the year 1272 [1855],
the date on which he set out,
stepping over the threshold from Hadramaut.

35 After he had achieved his goal
in the two Exalted Cities,
he turned his efforts to his departure
for the prosperous land of Egypt.

36 Upon reaching the country of Egypt
he enjoyed himself while seeking his family
in the city of Damietta, in the desert lands,
the place of his family, shaped like a comb.[27]

23 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers in Medina was Muhammad al-ʿAzb.

24 The word *ziyarah* literally means visit, but also means a pilgrimage to a grave of a holy person. The most important ancestor of the *sayyids* was, of course, the Prophet himself.

25 This is one of the honorary names of the Prophet Muhammad.

26 This is the name of one of the rivers in paradise (Qur'an 108: 1). The name is also used for the pool in paradise that was shown to the Prophet during his Night Journey, which became known as the Prophet's Pool, where the believers quenched their thirst upon entering paradise (E.I. (2), iv, 805–806).

27 This metaphor is not quite clear to me. Maybe the author means that the desert sand had ripples caused by the wind, or that the geography of Damietta, with its fingers of land surrounded by water, resembles a comb.

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[page 6]

37 These relatives were from his mother's side
for this was her place of origin.
The deceased stayed there in peace
and all received him with pleasure

38 to the point where the deceased was made to marry
by his family with great festivity.
A number of honours were prepared for him
and all were happy beyond description.

39 This will not be dealt with at length
and we return to his actions by day and night.
All he did was seek deep knowledge
whether in daylight or darkness.

40 He made contact with
some of the prominent Egyptian '*ulama*',[28]
studying with them until
he obtained from them their permission to teach (*ijazah*).

41 After that he asked permission
from his father in law and pure wife
to go to the Maghrib, having been commissioned,
and requested to spread religious knowledge.

42 His wife and his relatives
all felt very unhappy.
They tried to contain their feelings but couldn't
and could do nothing else than give up.

43 The deceased set out, forcing himself,
hardening his flagging heart as best he could.
He left his relatives, resigned to the Almighty,
and hoped they would find repose.

44 From Egypt he went to the city of Tunis
to obtain various kinds of knowledge.

28 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers in Egypt was Shaykh Ahmad al-Dimyati.

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To be with him made one feel convivial,
so he happened to make some intimate friendships.

45 They pointed out all the '*ulama'*
among whom the Great Mufti was foremost.
He possessed a house in the village of Qabis,
a trip of five hours from the city.

46 The deceased made demands to him
for knowledge, which he then granted.
Perfect success came in all those things
to which his heart aspired.

[page 7]
47 He found the teacher liked to smoke the hookah,
but the deceased did not oppose this.
In fact, because he wished to gain his favour,
he played his part and blew on the coals.

48 After that, he then set out
travelling on in western direction.
where *'ulama'* would be willing to share
their noble knowledge of high standing.

49 He reached Marrakech and the city of Fas
and after that left for Algiers,
gaining knowledge as pure as cotton,
like an egg with its shell stripped away,

50 from teachers of great service,
custodians protecting the Law (*Shari'a*) and the Mystical Truth (*Haqiqa*),
and from many experts in the inner and outer.
He peacefully succeeded in what he intended.

51 After this he departed
for Istanbul, the seat of the Venerated Caliph.
He started out from the port of Tangier
boarding a Turkish ship to Marseille.

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52 After the deceased reached that city
he disembarked and spent some time on a tour.
He saw all the marvels which were there,
left by the Muslims of days gone by.

53 For in the past, in the time of the Followers[29]
that city was in the hands of Muslims.
It had returned to the cursed ones
for its Muslim rulers were tyrants.

54 Among the marvels which were there
the deceased was able to witness
the ruin of a mosque, still intact,
with some of the fittings from that time.

55 Next he travelled on to the land of the Turks
stopping over on the isle of Malta to go
ashore, so that both women and men
could get the necessaries they needed.

56 The story of this will not be drawn out.
He reached Istanbul safely
and checked into a hotel by the name of Byzance,[30]
a hotel for decent people.

[page 8]
57 After he had arrived there
and before he went anywhere,
he remembered that he had a letter
from the Pasha of Medina.

58 It was to be taken to Sadr al-Aʿzam
so that he could meet up with
the Shaykh al-Islam, whom he wished to see,
lest it be difficult to meet him.

29 The Followers are the generation after the contemporaries of the Prophet.

30 I owe the identification of this hotel to A.H. de Groot, who has based this on his collection of old travel guides.

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59 Immediately he took out the letter
and asked someone to escort him
to Sadr al-Aʿzam, to hand it over.
He would go to meet him in person.

60 Upon his arrival he met
the Shaykh al-Islam and the *mufti*.
He sought permission to teach (*ijaza*) and knowledge
of religion in the proper way.[31]

61 I will not draw out what happened next,
the story of the deceased in Turkey.
After that, he departed to go
to the noble land of Syria.

62 This is also a holy land,
the place of many prophets and saints.
In addition there is a venerated stone,
the *qibla*[32] of the community (*umma*) and the prophets of old.

63 After the deceased arrived there
he sated his finer emotions with pilgrimage.
Bayt al-Muqaddas (= Jerusalem) was the place's name.
He took what knowledge he needed from there.

64 After he had accomplished all this
the deceased returned to his family.
They were residing in the land of Hadramaut
where he settled again for seven years.

65 Hereafter rose a longing.
A voice spoke in his heart.
He strongly desired to lay eyes on
the city of Batavia, where he came from.

31 A note in the margin mentions: among his teachers in Istanbul was the Shaykh al-Islam.

32 The *qibla* is the direction to which Muslims turn in praying.

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66 Because he could no longer bear this
he politely sought his family's consent,
saying 'Hopefully, if God wills it,
I will return, according to what God has determined.'

[page 9]
67 After receiving his family's permission
the deceased then firmed his resolve
and left, departing through the gate,
riding a camel over the stony hills.

68 Next, he reached the harbour of Shihr
and boarded a ship when he came to the coast,
straight to Singapore, where he made a stop
and informed Batavia that he was approaching.

69 His entire family was taken by surprise,
passing on the news in confusion.
When he arrived, all were ready to receive him,
excitement on his left and right.

70 In the year 1279
on the seventeenth day of the month,[33]
precisely in which he was born,
he met all his family and friends.

Second part of the story *Qamar al-zaman*
The story after he had reached Batavia

71 Listen, Sir, as I relate
the deceased's affairs, and make them clear.
After he had reached the city of Batavia
he settled there in happiness

72 with his relatives who were there
from his mother's side,
for his grandfather had already passed away
so it was up to the others to cheer his heart.

33 17 Rabiʿ al-awwal 1279 = 12 September 1862.

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73 After about three months had passed
from the time he had sailed back home
many people started to come to him,
all of them asking to study with him.

74 The deceased did not refuse this
but accepted them unconditionally,
'Please, all of you, do not hang back,
at whatever time you wish.

75 I do not hide away my knowledge,
whatever I have acquired.
For the sake of Allah I will teach
and have no wish for remuneration.'

[page 10]
76 So they studied with him
the sciences of religion, one by one.
But he did not specify
a particular day or time.

77 And so it happened, on one day,
that a man of deep scholarship came to him.
Haji ʿAbd al-Ghani Bima was his name,
for Bima was his place of origin.

78 He requested as strongly as he could
that the deceased replace him
as the devoted teacher in the mosque of Pekojan
for he was already weak in body.

79 The deceased did not refuse the revered man,
for Haji ʿAbd al-Ghani was one of the saints.
As is known by people at large
the deceased followed his suggestion.

80 The deceased then began to teach
once every eight days.
Many were present, left and right.
Words can't describe how much people liked it.

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81 Thenceforth the deceased would always
teach his pupils one by one,
explaining religion and helping
to keep peace in the land at all times.

82 Any time a person was wrong
the deceased would stand up, he would not concede.
He rejected the person's wrongdoing
to ensure the public's well-being.

83 Especially in the domain of religion
he was quick to explain, not tardy.
His suspicion was strong without equal
because this is the duty of the '*ulama*'.

The occurrence of the first tribulation in the year 1283 [1866]
A slave sells amulets, claiming to be a *sayyid*

84 At a certain point in time
a person of African descent arrived.
He had been a slave and was now free
and had come from the city of Mecca.

[page 11]
85 He arrived in Surabaya, then went to Batavia
in order to cheat the native Jawi people.
He claimed to be a *sayyid* from the clan of Zawawi
and deceived people by selling amulets.

86 Many people trusted him
and asked him for curative water
while in reality he was a crocodile
coming here to swindle.

87 When bowing in prayer, he took very long
so people would think him a saint.
In fact he was a frying pan's underside
to be carried off and dumped in the river.

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88 Many people then called upon
the deceased, with some hesitation.
They spoke of the marvels, of people thronging,
and the crowds coming to honour him.

89 The decease immediately met him
to scrutinise him carefully.
After he had looked him over,
the deceased realised with certainty

90 that he was a slave from the clan of Zawawi
whom he had met often in Mecca
in the house of his master, whom he had known,
and who had now come to Batavia.

91 His name was Murja'an.
The deceased said, 'Hey, Murja'an, what is going on?
You are now deceiving people,
do you not fear the Only Lord?

92 I know you are a freed slave of Zawawi
now creating havoc.
You think all the Jawi are stupid.
Repent immediately or be taken away!'

93 Next the deceased went to report
and Murja'an was taken by the police[34]
who scrubbed his mouth and pulled out his teeth
and sent him back home to the West Northwest.

The occurrence of the second tribulation in the year 1288 [1871]
A slave claims to belong to the Banu Shayba

[page 12]
94 Not long after this
someone stranger than him arrived.
His appearance was extreme,
for feigning was part of his ruse.

34 The word *sekawut* probably means scout, translated here with police.

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95 He claimed to be from the Banu Shayba
and that he had held the key of the Kaʿba.
In fact he was a slave of the Zanj[35]
and actually born in Mecca.

96 He said to the people: 'Verily
the Kaʿba is almost in ruin.
What if it is not held firm?
That will be doomsday, the world will be ashes!

97 Let us help each other.
Our outlook should be one of giving.
Do not have affection for money.
let it not happen that we surrender ourselves.'

98 Many people were cheated,
giving up all the money they had.
News of this spread here and there
until it reached our grandfather.

99 He then sent a spy
to Kota from Petamburan
to carefully observe what was really happening
and to hear what he had to tell.

100 After the spy had observed him,
he saw clearly that this man was evil.
Immediately he returned quickly
to inform the deceased of what he had found.

101 Next, the deceased went out to find him,
and after arriving, he looked him over.
Without delay he gave him a whipping.
He was half alive and half dead.

102 Then, he went to make a report,
to inform the administration
so that the man, with all haste

35 Zanj refers to the people of Black Africa, in particular East Africa E.I. (2), xi, 444–445.

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would be sent home without delay.

103 For he had deceived the people.
His manner and religion showed his evil.
He could just as well have taught war,
tempting the gullible into forbidden things.

[page 13]
104 Because he had come from Mecca
naturally the people liked him.
Whatever he said, no one suspected
that it was lies or deceit.

105 The government then sent him back
to the City of Mecca, the impostor's home,
lest he should once again
deceive the people of the villages.

106 In this way the deceased always made clear
the rules of religion and taught them
in the two mosques he frequented;
the big quarter of Pekojan along with

107 the big quarter of Pasar Senin
at the request of Haji ʻAbd al-Muʻin.
More tireless than the other '*ulama*',
he held religion in the greatest esteem.

108 Because the deceased trod the straight road
the government stayed true to him.
Religion could not be taken lightly;
a wrong doing was quickly attacked.

The occurrence of the third tribulation in the year 1295 [1878]
A saint of false miracles

109 At a certain point in time
that kind of man arrived again.
A *sayyid*, but certainly the son of a slave girl,
claiming the purest of saintly quality.

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110 Although he was just like one of your uncles,
he was gold outside and copper inside.
So when one saw how he held himself
it was sure that one would not doubt him.

111 His turban was as a big as a tray.
His tooth-pick (*siwak*) was long, in no small way.
He was very skilful as a puppeteer (*dalang*),
and when reciting the *tasbih*,[36] he was like a demon.

112 Whenever he appeared in public
where the *mawlid*[37] was read and the tambourine beaten,
'Our Master' pretended to be in ecstasy,
about to throw himself down to the ground.

[page 14]
113 When he started to sway back and forth,
many who were there thought his spirit had left him.
All held him up with great affection,
and more joined in to support the swindler.

114 After news of this reached the old man
he sent out orders to invite him.
This miracle man like a spider,
would give a laugh to those who watched him!

115 Because he wanted to see 'Our Master'
fall on the ground in ecstasy,
the deceased prepared everything
needed for the *mawlid* and tambourine playing.

116 The deceased said: 'I strongly forbid you
to hold up this person who says he's a saint.
When he is swaying, do not turn to him,
let him collapse altogether.'

117 The people then read the *mawlid* story;
our uncle began to tremble somewhat.

36 Arabic formula in praise of God.

37 This is the birth story of the Prophet.

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Next, cooked and sticky rice were set down
with other foods delicious to taste.

118 The deceased said: 'If his ecstasy is real
he will not know his left from his right,
even if he happens to fall
on top of the food placed there.

119 But if he is an impostor
he will surely do his best to choose
an empty space so that
he can put down his hands to avoid disaster.'

120 Next, he started to really sway,
pretending his spirit had left him.
Seeing no one was coming to help
he threw himself down, but he groped with his hands.

121 He groped to single out a place
to quickly put his hands down.
He ended up with his limbs akimbo,
like a person who has been hit by a spell.

122 His turban fell in the sauce.
His *siwak* bounced off and hit an old man.
People broke out in laughter
to Mr. Spider's great embarrassment.

[page 15]
123 Hereupon, the deceased went to ask
from the court of the government
that this clearly evil person
be sent home unconditionally.

The occurrence of the fourth tribulation in the year 1303 [1885]
A false *tarekat*[38]

124 At a particular point in time
the *tarekat* threat popped up in every village,

38 A *tarekat* is a mystical brotherhood.

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coming from leaders who could only just
read the *alif, ba', ta', tha'*.

125 The desire of these people
was only one particular thing,
namely to fill their pockets
so they could enjoy themselves for a while.

126 Some of these *tarekat* teachers
were teaching students whom they had seduced.
Every single one had agreed
to oppose the government by stealth.

127 There were also a number of teachers
who taught their pupils whenever they could
to refrain from all desirable things,
from meat, eggs and also marriage.

128 Many followed this very strictly
and all of them bought their amulets
so that they could bear the hardship
and mortify their desires.

129 The deceased then explained
that the religion of Islam does not forbid
all the bounties that have been provided
but encourages that each be used.

130 In some of the books which he wrote,
amongst them one named *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*,[39]
the mistakes can be discerned
in the doctrine of *tarekat* teachers of that kind.

131 They should be called teachers who 'pull and weave'
and not teachers of the '*tarekat*,'[40]

39 A translation of the book titles mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* will be provided in the pertinent chapters of this book.

40 The author makes a play on words here, perverting *tarekat* (Sufi brotherhood) into *tarik ikat* (pull and weave).

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for they do not agree with the truth
and should be caught, like fish in a net.

[page 16]

The occurrence of the fifth tribulation in the year 1309 [1891]
Dishonest claims of dreams

132 At another point in time
a further tribulation of this kind arose.
It came from a bankrupt hypocrite
claiming to be a servant of the Venerated Grave.[41]

133 He claimed to bring news of all events,
that his dreams would turn out to be true.
He bore a testament (*wasiat*) on behalf of our Prophet,
and was obliged to spread this news:

134 'This world is approaching the Day of Resurrection.
Go forthwith and inform my *umma*.
They must fast for three days
and will be rewarded with ten kinds of bounty.'

135 He lied about all kinds of things
without any fear of God.
He dared to bring forward such news,
which he ascribed to our Prophet.

136 The deceased then refuted this,
calling him an unequivocal liar.
He pointed out the relevant texts
lest the *umma* of Muhammad fall into error.

137 He explained this in a book
which he named [*al-*]*Nasiha al-murdiyya*.
From this book one can learn the travails
of this liar who claimed to have visions.

41 The grave of the Prophet in Medina.

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The occurrence of the sixth tribulation in the year 1314 [1896]
People receiving interest

138 Not long afterwards there came into view
the danger of many people taking interest.
The deceased then gave a warning
to those ghosts and devils

139 by writing some comprehensive books
hoping that they might repent.
He explained that this was the greatest disaster,
and not a deed bringing large rewards.

[page 17]
140 Amongst the books he wrote on interest
was *Bunnat al-jalis*, that was its name.
It was adorned with verses like electricity (*kahraba*),[42]
that is like an electric lamp from Europe.

The occurrence of the seventh tribulation in the year 1319 [1902]
A *penghulu* transgresses the Law

141 Not long after came a disaster
about setting the fast before sighting the new moon.
It came from a *penghulu* with an affliction
who did not care about transgressing.

142 His desire was to show himself off
so that he would be praised or liked.
He did not believe he could go to Hell,
as long as he obtained a high position.

143 News of this then spread
from Kota to Petamburan.
At that time, the deceased set out
to teach that *penghulu* a lesson.

42 *kahraba* is the Arabic word for electricity.

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144 So it was that on a Friday, which as it happened
was the day he [the *penghulu*] had set [to commence fasting],
the deceased went with all haste
to the mosque of Pekojan, where he had a drink.

145 Everybody saw him there
and all joined in drinking, no one prevented them.
The treacherous *penghulu's* heart was broken
for his desires had been interrupted.

146 This is how some *penghulus* behave,
the ones whose faith is terribly weak.
As long as they get what they need
they have no regard for fear or shame.

147 The deceased then made this clear
in a book of great detail.
The sighting of the moon was its sole concern.
It was illustrated with all the images of the moon.

148 Its title was *Tamyiz al-haqq min al-dalal*,
and it was published by him
for the public, so they might be aware
and they all may avoid error.

[page 18]

The occurrence of the eighth tribulation in the year 1321 [1903]
An intention to make a new religion

149 At a certain time there arose a danger
because of a deceitful person
who wrote a mischievous book
which he called 'The true knowledge' (*ilmu peyakinan*).

150 His aim was the destruction of
the Islamic religion in the surrounding villages.
He considered himself to be fully capable
of destroying the religion of the Only God.

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151 Actually he was a *penghulu*
in the upper part of Bandung.
Like a rice-plant with only its hairs remaining,
eaten away by a parasitic worm.

152 Verily, the religion of the Only Lord
should not be disturbed or destroyed at all.
Just like something which spreads its poison,
yet later feels its own destruction.

153 Look at the story of King Abraha[43]
whose intentions were purely evil.
At that time he wished to pull down the Kaʿba
with an elephant, black like a ghost.

154 Look, then at the results of that.
With the help of God, Our Master,
Abraha and all his men were destroyed,
smashed into the earth.

155 A host of Ababil birds pelted
his people with *sijjil* stones,
piled up like [lumps of] the *gambir*[44] plant,
their initial greed ended in failure.

156 The deceased then went to challenge him,
to visit him in Bandung.
He went straight to the *penghulu*'s house,
but was not destined to confront the wretch there.

157 Next, he went with the proofs he held
to the house of the honoured Regent of Bandung.
Once again he was not in the building.
He had left the city to hide.

43 See Qur'an 105.

44 The text reads *gambil*, which fits the rhyme of the stanza. However, *gambir* (Lat. *Uncaria gambier*) gives a better meaning; after this plant has been cooked and prepared for use, it is cut into small lumps, see ENI, i, 736–737, s.v. I owe this suggestion to Huub de Jonge.

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[page 19]

158 So, the deceased then wrote
a book which was entitled
*Sawn al-din*. In it he explained
a number of that spectre's wrongdoings.

The occurrence of the ninth tribulation in the year 1325 [1907]
An act contrary to Law

159 Not long after the end of that affair,
of that man who had sinned against God,
another wrongdoer arrived
who read the *mawlid*, ending with lute music.

160 He reasoned that this was for the *mawlid* reading,
but in fact he was causing a stir.
It was only to satisfy their hearts and mouths,
jigging and dancing with great excitement.

161 How can one obtain a reward
when the *mawlid* reading is mixed with craziness?
He said this was what the saints did
in the vastness between earth and heaven's seven layers.

162 The deceased then shed light on
the mistake that the public were making.
Those who were present, eating and drinking,
would together fall under this judgement.

163 All they were doing was forbidden.
Their entitlement would be the tortures of Hell.
Because of their acts of disobedience
they would inherit the wrath of God.

164 The deceased wrote a number of things,
books full of all kinds of threats,
made of uncompromising verses and traditions (*ayat dan hadith*),
like a sword of extreme sharpness.

165 Among the books he wrote
was one entitled *Ihda' al-fawa'id*.

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It is full of this kind of thing.
Look for yourself, and all will be clear.

The occurrence of the tenth tribulation in the year 1329 [1911]
The slander of the Wahhabi group

[page 20]
166 One day there suddenly leapt up
a disaster that had already taken hold.
It arrived at full speed from Egypt;
the journal *al-Manar* with its evil slanders.

167 The author belonged to the Devil (*Dajjal*).
Now as for *Dajjal*, it originally meant
a person who mixes wrong and right,
using his wiles to mislead the people.

168 The deceased, at that time, was close to death
but he still had the ability
to avert the danger with wisdom
so the community of Muhammad would not be cursed.

169 He revealed *al-Manar* belonged to the Wahhabi school
who had dared to slander the Prophet.
Their evil was so great it even exceeded
that of the warlike unbelievers.

170 Some of the authors of *al-Manar* knew
that the leaders of the people in the land of the Jawa
were *sayyid*s of the Ba ʿAlawi clan
supported by people of town and country.

171 So they sent the journal of *al-Manar*
with its mixture of wrong and right
skilfully causing confusion
by making the truth obscure.

172 It had first been sent to the *sayyid*s,
although it was these they wished to destroy.

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They intended that the locals would come to like it
because the *sayyid*s had already begun to do so.

173 Many *sayyid*s were hit by treachery,
to the point where people were cursing the saints
as well as the Companions of the venerated Prophet[45]
with slanders as evil as humans could make.

174 The journal spread stories of wars
between the Banu Hashim and the Banu Umayya,
so that the *sayyid*s would seem to be wasting their time;
crushing fibres with a pestle yields nothing but mulch.

175 The deceased quickly rejected this
by unconditionally declaring the Wahhabis unbelievers.
In a number of books he gave relevant proofs
so the *sayyid*s would be saved from this curse.

[page 21]
176 Amongst the books he wrote
was *Fasl al-khitab*, its name is clear.
*I'anat al-mustarshidin* appeared also,
with *Salamat al-Muslimin*, [The safeguarding of the Muslims] from fear.

177 These were to safeguard Muslims
from the slander of their enemies,
who toppled Muslims and believers
into the pool of heresy.

178 The character of the deceased was just like this,
for the whole of his life it was always so.
He clarified religion at all times,
averting all dangers such as those mentioned.

179 In essence, he was like a lamp
radiating goodness all over the place.

45 They are the contemporaries of the Prophet.

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For this reason many loved him,
from the masses as well as the government.

180 It was for this reason that
the deceased received a mark of honour.
The *Nederlandse Leeuw* was bestowed on him
by the Queen of Holland, with all of her bounties.

181 This matter will not be dealt with at length
for people already know of it.
In what follows will be related
the deceased's final days and his testament.

182 'All of you, take care!
After my death, many things will take place.
Dissension in religion will happen time and again
so take great care and do not be indifferent.

183 All kinds of *Dajjal*s will appear
to destroy religion by day and night,
permitting the forbidden, as if they are animals,
and forbidding things that are not prohibited.

184 Keep your good selves aloof
from them, and do not approach them.
Do not be drawn to their seductions
even though they may dance and prance.

185 Moreover, do not pay them attention
and pass over whatever they do.
Hopefully, God will destroy them
and whatever they do will not endure.

[page 22]
186 Their seduction is very subtle.
They are not ashamed to offer money
in order to make their aims a success.
Do not let yourself be taken in by this.'

187 His life did not have much longer to go
for the deceased then became ill.

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For three months more he lasted
and then returned to the mercy of his Lord.

188 After the deceased had died
it felt as if the Indies were in darkness.
The like of him was difficult to find,
a person to avert all dangers.

189 The dangers were those of religion
but also dangers in worldly matters.
He had contemporaries, but none was his equal.
A person like him held ties of love.

190 After the deceased had been washed
people arrived to perform the prayer.
After that they all escorted him,
the number of people could not be established.

191 Approximately five thousand persons
accompanied the corpse, filling the streets.
It was like the people wanted to go to war,
extremely crowded and difficult to control.

192 Everyone was there, both poor and rich,
policemen and civil servants were present,
escorting the noble corpse,
ignoring their difficulties and discomfort.

193 Even more so for all the '*ulama*',
the most important of the escorts.
*Tahlil*[46] together with blessings
being uttered by one and all.

194 After the dead had been put in the grave,
and after the *talqin*[47] was performed,
Sayyid 'Ali arose to warn

46 Utterance of the formula *la illaha illa Allah*, 'There is no God, but Allah.'

47 This is the utterance of the Profession of Faith, which is recited for the deceased to prepare him for his meeting with the Angels of Death who come to examine his faith in the grave, Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 163.

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all those attending that they should listen.

195 His admonition was fitting and virtuous,
mentioning the influence of the deceased.
What he related saddened the heart,
reminding those present of so many things.

[page 23]
196 After that, one of the *'ulama'* arose
named Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman.
He also reminded those attending
of what was proper in custom and religion.

197 He mentioned the deceased's virtues
and that the likes of him were difficult to find,
so all should remember to pray for him
and hopefully God would forgive his sins.

198 After that everybody returned,
each going back to his home
with a sad heart because of the feeling
that they had lost their leader.

199 Here ends this story of the deceased.
This is as far as it comes.
My hope is that his brethren
will recite the *fatiha*[48] solemnly.

200 As for the points in time of his death,
these are mentioned below, one by one,
the exact details of the date and epoch,
the month, the year as well as the moment.

201 His death took place on the eve of Monday,
the time was three o'clock in the night,
on the twenty second of the month of Safar
in the year one three three two.[49]

48 First chapter of the Qur'an.

49 The date of 22 Safar 1332 corresponds to 18 January 1914.

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This is how I have observed the life and times of the late Habib ʿUthman ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Yahya.

## 6 Conclusion

In this chapter I have translated the poetic version of the life story of Sayyid ʿUthman originating from the circles of his immediate family. This text demonstrates the splendid career of Sayyid ʿUthman, as manifest in his education with great scholars in the Middle East, his huge international network and his exemplary role in society. Thus, having presented 'a view from within' on the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, the first part of this book ends here.

In what follows, in the second part of this book I will provide an academic description of the life of Sayyid ʿUthman on the basis of the sources that I have at my disposal. Subsequently, in the third and concluding part of the book, I will return to this 'view from within' for the sake of comparison.

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# PART 2

## *The Life and Work of Sayyid ʿUthman*

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CHAPTER 2

# The Formative Years of Sayyid ʿUthman (1822–1862)

## 1 Introduction

In this chapter I will deal with the period from 1822, the year that Sayyid ʿUthman was born in Batavia, until 1862, the year that he returned from the Middle East to his native city. This is a rather long period, but the available information for this chapter is much less abundant than for later periods, after Sayyid ʿUthman had settled permanently in Batavia. This can be explained by the fact that after his return to the Netherlands East Indies, he started to become known, not only in the local Muslim community, but also in the circles of the colonial administration. This change in status is reflected in a variety of sources, as will become apparent in the next chapters.

The scarcity of information notwithstanding, and on the basis of the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* as the main sources, this chapter will sketch the formative years of Sayyid ʿUthman's life. As mentioned in the previous chapter, despite the specific nature of both texts the information they provide is very accurate, in as far as this can be corroborated by other sources. For this reason, I have considered information from these texts to be reliable, unless there are specific reasons to doubt it. On the basis of these two texts and on additional sources, I will deal with his youth and his early education in Batavia, his further education in Mecca and Hadramaut, and his travels in the Middle East. I will start with some background information about his family.

## 2 Family Background

In the migratory movements from Hadramaut to the areas around the Indian Ocean the principle of chain migration is manifest: people migrate to regions and towns where members of their own family have already settled. Thus, we see that at the end of the nineteenth century the Hadrami Arabs in Batavia mainly came from particular families, notably the Al al-ʿAttas, Al al-Haddad, Al al-Habshi, Al al-Saqqaf and the Al Shahab.[1] Interestingly, these families can

1 Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 24. The Arabic noun *Al* (with a long vowel a) means family or clan, and should not be confused with the definite article *al-*, which is always connected with the following noun.

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still be found in present-day Indonesia. The family from which Sayyid ʿUthman originated, the Al Yahya, originally from al-Ghuraf in Hadramaut,[2] was not so well represented in Southeast Asia, but, nevertheless, individual members of the Al Yahya came to the Netherlands East Indies for shorter or longer periods of time. One interesting example is a religious scholar by the name of Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar ibn Yahya al-ʿAlawi (1794–1849) who was later to become one of Sayyid ʿUthman's teachers in Hadramaut. Another example is the father of Sayyid ʿUthman. Both members of the Al Yahya will be dealt with below in more detail.

As mentioned earlier, Sayyid ʿUthman originated from a family of *sayyids*, the class of religious nobility that traced its origin back to the Prophet Muhammad. This origin was of the utmost importance to Sayyid ʿUthman, as well as to other *sayyids*; firstly, for social reasons, because a member of this class was regarded as a natural leader in religious matters and enjoyed all kinds of privileges in interactions with the common believers and, secondly, this noble lineage also brought scholarly prestige, because it was thought that by following the *sayyids* one was automatically following the Prophet, the ultimate source of all Islamic knowledge. This Prophetic origin was passed on through the male members of the family, but this noble lineage also had implications for the daughters of *sayyid* families. These girls were denoted by the title *sharifa*, or – less commonly – *sayyida*. Like all Muslim women they were supposed to marry in accordance with the Shariʿa principle of *kafaʾa*. According to this principle, a girl should marry a man of her own standing, or of higher rank. How this principle was understood, differs according to time and place, but in this particular context the physical genealogy was considered decisive and this meant that a *sharifa* could only marry a *sayyid*.[3] In Southeast Asia many non-*sayyid* Arabs had become rich through trade and, consequently, no longer regarded the ancestry of the *sayyids* as something valuable and this also affected their views on the *kafaʾa* principle.[4] As we will see later, this led to many debates, especially from the beginning of the twentieth century.

This noble genealogy and its purity was of great concern to Sayyid ʿUthman and throughout his lifetime he published various works on this, including a work from 1884, entitled *al-Silsila al-Nabawiyya fi asanid al-sada al-ʿAlawiyya ila jaddihim al-Mustafa Khayr al-bariyya – salla allahu ʿalayhi wa-sallama*, 'The

2 Abou Shouk, *al-Athar al-kamila*, 26, n. 1.

3 In some Arab circles in contemporary Indonesia this principle is still upheld and results in a great problem, since the number of suitable marriage candidates for *sharifas* is seriously restricted. See Mona Abaza, 'Markets of faith,' 178.

4 Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 140–142.

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Prophetic chain containing the lines of the ʿAlawi *sayyids* up to their Chosen forefather, the Best of Creation – may God bless him and grant him peace,' the Best of Creation, being one of the many conventional ways to denote the Prophet Muhammad.[5] In addition to more narrative writings dealing with genealogy, printed posters of family trees of the *sayyids* originating from the printing office of Sayyid ʿUthman are also known. A good example of these posters depicts an intricate tree, consisting of branches and sub-branches, which together form a complicated web of names, in this case ending in ʿAdnan, the ancestor of the Northern Arabs, via the Prophet Muhammad.[6]

Sayyid ʿUthman belonged to the Al Yahya and the earliest information I have been able to find about his direct ancestors relates to his great grandfather. This person was called Sayyid ʿUmar and was born in Hadramaut in a village called Qarat Al Shaykh.[7] Dates for this man are not known to me, but he must have been born somewhere in the eighteenth century. His son was called Sayyid ʿAqil ibn ʿUmar (d. 1831) and this individual was the paternal grandfather of Sayyid ʿUthman. He was born in Mecca, where other members of the Hadrami clan had settled and where his father had apparently moved. In the Holy City he became a scholar of a certain reputation.[8] He was working as a teacher in the Haram in Mecca when the Saudi ruler, ʿAbd al-ʿAziz ibn Saʿud, took over the Holy City at the very beginning of the nineteenth century. Although Ibn Saʿud had many teachers removed from their posts, Sayyid ʿUthman's grandfather was permitted to stay on. Moreover, he was allowed to continue giving formal pieces of advice from the viewpoint of Islamic law (*fatwas*). He was the most prominent ʿAlawi teacher (*shaykh masha'ikh al-ʿAlawiyyin*) in the fields of Shariʿa and mysticism, and amongst others, he taught ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir, who would later teach his grandson Sayyid ʿUthman.[9]

The son of Sayyid ʿAqil was Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAqil ibn ʿUmar ibn Yahya who was also born in Mecca and he would become the father of Sayyid ʿUthman. He was evidently one of the scholars/tradesmen of the Hadrami diaspora who wandered around trying their luck, but no details are known about when and how he ended up in Batavia.[10] In this city he married Amina, daughter of ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri, and from this marriage Sayyid ʿUthman was born in 1822.

5 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 27.

6 Ibid., no. 54.

7 *Suluh zaman*, 2.

8 Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 109.

9 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 426 n. 2; *al-Manar* 12:11 (13 December 1909), 871–873.

10 Perhaps he was inspired by his rich uncle Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar ibn Yahya al-ʿAlawi (1794–1849) who was born and lived in Masilat Al Shaykh in Hadramaut in 1848, and who

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Three years later, Sayyid ʿUthman's father departed for Mecca, never to return to the Indies. At least one other child appears to have been born from this marriage. We can be sure of this as the *Suluh zaman* (p. 2) relates that when ʿAbd Allah left for Mecca, he took his first-born son with him; that is to say, the older brother of Sayyid ʿUthman, named Sayyid Hashim ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAqil ibn Yahya. Later, Sayyid ʿUthman would count his father among his teachers in the Holy City.

## 3 Birth and Youth in Batavia (1822–1841)

Sayyid ʿUthman was born in Batavia on 17 Rabiʿ al-awwal 1238, which corresponds to 1 December 1822.[11] According to the *Qamar al-zaman*, his birth took place in Pekojan, which was the traditional Arab quarter of Batavia at the time.[12]

From the moment Sayyid ʿUthman's father returned to Mecca, when his son was three years old, Sayyid ʿUthman was taken care of by his maternal grandfather ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri. This person had come from Egypt and had initially been engaged in business in Palembang and in Padang, both in Sumatra.[13] Later, he bought some land in Batavia and settled in Petamburan where he established a mosque and started to work on Islamic topics, in particular astronomy. Although he had many pupils, he never published anything. Moreover, it is known that he corresponded with the Sultan of Sumenep on the island of Madura, Paku Nata Ningrat (1812–1854), who was fluent in Arabic and who was a man of letters. Notably, he was also on excellent terms with the Dutch authorities. He died in 1847.[14] ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri was buried next to his own mosque in Petamburan, together with his two daughters, Amina, the mother of Sayyid ʿUthman, and Fatima, who married a first cousin of Sayyid Uthman, ʿUthman ibn Muhammad Banahsan.[15] In December 2011, I had the opportunity to visit

had travelled widely, including to Cairo and Hyderabad, and who had lived for some time in Java, cf. Hartwig, *Hyderabad*, 91, 92 n. 147; Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 114–115.

11 *Suluh zaman*, 2.

12 According to M.A. Alaydrus (interview with the author 20 November 2006), the birthplace was actually in Angkeh, some 7 km west of Batavia.

13 He had a cousin ʿAbd Allah who was born in Palembang, who later served the Sultan there as a secretary. See Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 163. A son of ʿAbd Allah made a poem in praise of the Dutch Queen Wilhelmina in 1898, see Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen,' 173.

14 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 163; Talib, 'Munshi Abdullah,' 33 n. 27.

15 This information was given to me in an interview with Mr. M.A. Alaydrus, Jakarta 20 November 2006.

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FIGURE 2 *Grave of ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri in Petamburan, Jakarta*
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR, DECEMBER 2011

Petamburan. The graves of the two daughters could not be identified, but the grave of ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri himself is clearly recognizable by the Arabic inscription on the gravestone. This reads in translation: '*al-fatiha* for the spirit of Shaykh ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri al-Saʿidi al-ʿUdawi – may God Almighty grant him His mercy. Amen.' Although nothing is known about the wife (or wives) of ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri (i.e. the maternal grandmother of Sayyid ʿUthman), apart from the fact that she was also buried in Petamburan,[16] we may assume that the mother of his daughter Amina was an indigenous person, since it was rare for

16 *Suluh Zaman*, 8.

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Arab migrants to bring women from their homeland with them. Sayyid ʿUthman was, therefore, the offspring of a Hadrami father from Mecca and a half Egyptian/half indigenous mother.

It was his maternal grandfather, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri, who gave Sayyid ʿUthman his initial education. This grandfather taught the young Sayyid ʿUthman how 'to behave properly in formal and informal situations' (*segala ilmu adab beserta adat istiadat yang sopan*) and he initiated him in religious studies: first he was taught the Arabic alphabet, next the reading of the Qur'an, followed by theology, *fiqh* and mysticism, and then the auxiliary sciences, including the various branches of Arabic grammar. The subsequent step in his education was *tafsir*, Hadith and astronomy and other Islamic sciences.[17] ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri was apparently a teacher with a great reputation, because in the famous *Tuhfat al-nafis*, 'The precious gift,' by Raja Ali Haji from Riau, it is mentioned that his father, Raja Ahmad (d. 1878), had repeatedly travelled to Batavia to follow ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri's lessons in astronomy.[18] This expertise in astronomy is also evident from an event at the beginning of the nineteenth century. ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri established that the direction for praying (*qibla*) at a mosque in Palembang was not correct and, consequently, his advice was taken and the direction adjusted.[19] Although it is not mentioned, I assume that the lessons of his grandfather will have been in Arabic. Perhaps, Sayyid ʿUthman also participated in lessons that were given to more students at the same time.

The *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 13) mentions Sayyid ʿUthman also studied with Malay scholars in Batavia as well as with his grandfather. This is noteworthy, as we can assume that Sayyid ʿUthman's Malay teachers almost certainly have used Malay in order to explain the Islamic religious books and, as a result, Sayyid ʿUthman will have become acquainted with basic Muslim terminology in Malay and also the difficulties of transmitting traditional Arabic scholarship into the vernacular. Unfortunately, no names of his Malay teachers are known.

ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri not only introduced his grandson to the Islamic sciences, but, in the absence of his father, he also raised Sayyid ʿUthman and so they must have been very close. This intimate relationship is hinted at in a remark in an obituary of Sayyid ʿUthman that appeared in March 1914. This text praises the excellent memory of Sayyid ʿUthman and illustrates this with the

17 *Suluh Zaman*, 3.

18 Raja Ali Haji, *Tuhfat al-Nafis*, 237. The Malay reads: *tatkala Raja Ahmad itu pergi berulang-ulang mengaji ilmu falakiya kepada Syekh Abd al-Rahman Misri di dalam Betawi itu*. This text is also available at the Malay Concordance Project, http://mcp.anu.edu.au.

19 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 844.

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following anecdote: When Sayyid ʿUthman visited the palace of the Governor General in 1899, to thank him for the royal decoration he had received, he noticed a portrait of the former Governor General P. Merkus (1841–1844), whom he immediately recognized as someone he had met as a young man, when he accompanied his grandfather to an audience at the palace.[20] It is interesting to see that Merkus apparently received Sayyid ʿUthman's grandfather in the palace, probably to consult him on things Islamic in the colonies. As we have seen, L.W.C. van den Berg also underlined the closeness of ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri to the Dutch authorities.

During this first Batavian period of his life, Sayyid ʿUthman's mother passed away and this motivated him to visit his father who had left Batavia when Sayyid ʿUthman was three years old to resettle in Mecca. At the same time, this enabled him to perform the pilgrimage and continue his studies in the Holy City. After having gained permission from his grandfather to go, the nineteen-year-old Sayyid ʿUthman departed for the Holy Land in August 1841.

## 4 Stay in Mecca (1841–1847)

One of the motivations for Sayyid ʿUthman going to Mecca was to visit his family; indeed, it is reported that upon arrival in Mecca, Sayyid ʿUthman was reunited with his father and his older brother.[21] The political situation in Mecca at the time was rather unstable, because there was a permanent rivalry between the representatives of the Ottoman sovereigns and the local Meccan rulers, the Sharifs, while in the background there was also a threat from the Wahhabis.[22]

As a result of its central position within Islam, Mecca has always been an important intellectual and educational centre for Muslims from around the globe. A large educational infrastructure existed in the Holy City, which was still very traditional at the time. The curriculum consisted entirely of religious subjects and their auxiliaries, such as the various branches of Arabic linguistics. The students would sit at the feet of the great teachers who had a particular specialization and the curriculum was not very structured; there was no fixed programme of study and there were no classrooms. Education mainly consisted of learning the great classical works of Islam and their canonical commentaries by heart, repeating them and, as the apex of intellectual

20 Buno Heslinga, 'Said Othman,' 1124.

21 *Suluh Zaman*, 3.

22 Ochsenwald, *Religion, society and the state in Arabia*, 131–137.

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activity, perhaps commenting upon them. In Mecca, amongst others also a number of Hadrami teachers were prominent.[23] Within this system, Sayyid ʿUthman continued the education that he had started under his grandfather and local Malay teachers in Batavia. An important aspect that can help us properly understand the significance of Sayyid ʿUthman's stay in Mecca is the existence of the Jawa colony in the Holy City. As mentioned in the introduction, this colony formed an important centre for Islamic education for Muslims from the Netherlands East Indies and functioned as an intermediary for a permanent flow of writings and ideas from the Holy City back to the Netherlands East Indies. As a matter of course, Sayyid ʿUthman will also have been interacting with the Jawa colony and, as will become clear, once he returned to Batavia, he continued to employ people from the Jawa colony in Mecca.

Sayyid ʿUthman had a number of teachers in the Holy City. Various sources make mention of these teachers, not only those in Mecca, but also those in Hadramaut. One of these sources is a preface from a book from the hand of Sayyid ʿUthman himself, entitled *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin ʿala ijtinab al-bidaʿ fi l-din*, 'The help for those who seek guidance in avoiding innovations in religion,' which he published towards the end of his life in 1911. This book was published within the framework of a polemic with the Egypt-based reformer Rashid Rida and with his followers in the archipelago (see Chapter Six). Apparently, the intended audience of this book needed to be impressed by the authority of Sayyid ʿUthman and, in order to show his credentials and to boost his authority, the book starts with a list of his teachers and a number of letters of support for his writings from a number of well-known scholars. Consequently, this preface provides a unique insight into the educational and academic network of Sayyid ʿUthman.[24]

In addition to this, I know of three charts that present the intellectual genealogy of Sayyid ʿUthman. These charts are comparable to the aforementioned posters that illustrate the family trees of the *sayyids*; however, contrary to the posters, the charts do not show the physical ancestors, but rather the teachers or intellectual ancestors of a person. Similar to these genealogical diagrams, these intellectual pedigrees also go back, ultimately, to the Prophet Muhammad. In the most simple of these diagrams[25] Sayyid ʿUthman, referring to himself as 'the dust of their feet' (*turab aqdamihim*), is directly linked to just four teachers, who should be regarded as his primary educators; namely, Ahmad al-Dimyati, Ahmad ibn Zayni Dahlan, both referred to as the *mufti* of Mecca, and al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir and al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn

23 Snouck, *Mekka*, 185–186.

24 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, 1–7.

25 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 14.

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ʿUmar ibn Yahya, who were his teachers in Hadramaut. These documents were printed by Sayyid ʿUthman and were almost certainly used to boost his intellectual credentials among his colleagues and in confrontation with his opponents. It is no surprise, therefore, that in other charts we see an increase in the number of his teachers and, consequently, of his scholarly authority. In the only one of the three charts that is dated, in 1909, it is briefly explained that this diagram contains Shafiʿi scholars who form the intellectual pedigree of Sayyid ʿUthman. In this chart Sayyid ʿUthman is directly linked with ten teachers, while in the third one he is linked to no less than 25 scholars. When we compare these charts with other evidence, the one that mentions ten teachers appears to be the most reliable.[26]

Taking both the preface of *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin* and the charts into account, we see that the three most important teachers of Sayyid ʿUthman in Mecca were Ahmad Dahlan, Ahmad al-Dimyati, and al-Habib Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Habshi. Ahmad Dahlan (1817–1886) is the best known of the three. Born in Mecca, he started teaching there in 1848, so one year after Sayyid ʿUthman's arrival in the Holy City. In 1871, the Ottoman authorities in the Hejaz appointed him to the rank of *mufti* of the Shafiʿis and supervisor of all scholars in the Holy City and, as such, he was one of the most prestigious scholars in the Muslim world at that time. Many Muslims from Southeast Asia regarded him as the highest authority in Islam, and many requests from Southeast Asia for *fatwas* were addressed to Ahmad Dahlan. He was known for, amongst other things, writing against the Wahhabis and their prohibition of grave visits and saint worship. Interestingly, C. Snouck Hurgronje knew him well and developed a personal bond with him during his stay in Mecca in 1885.[27]

Sayyid ʿUthman was clearly on good terms with Ahmad Dahlan, because it is known that he functioned for some time as assistant during the lectures of his master. Other data also demonstrate these good relations, which continued until the *mufti*'s death in 1886. A number of writings by Sayyid ʿUthman received official approval (*tashih*) from Ahmad Dahlan; the preface to the *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, for example, contains the text of four of his letters of approval (sg. *taqrid*) relating to works by Sayyid ʿUthman.[28] During the lectures of Ahmad Dahlan, Sayyid ʿUthman will also have made the acquaintance of

26 Ibid., no. 43 and no. 13, respectively. These documents shed interesting light on the scholarly tradition of the time and mention scholars like al-Ghazali, al-Shafiʿi and others, but it falls beyond the scope of this book to go into this in detail.

27 Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâʾis*; Freitag, 'Der Orientalist und der Mufti'; Witkam, 'Introduction.'

28 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, 4–5. The word *taqrid* ends in an emphatic d, while in standard Arabic the word should read *taqriz*, ending in an emphatic z (pl. *taqariz*).

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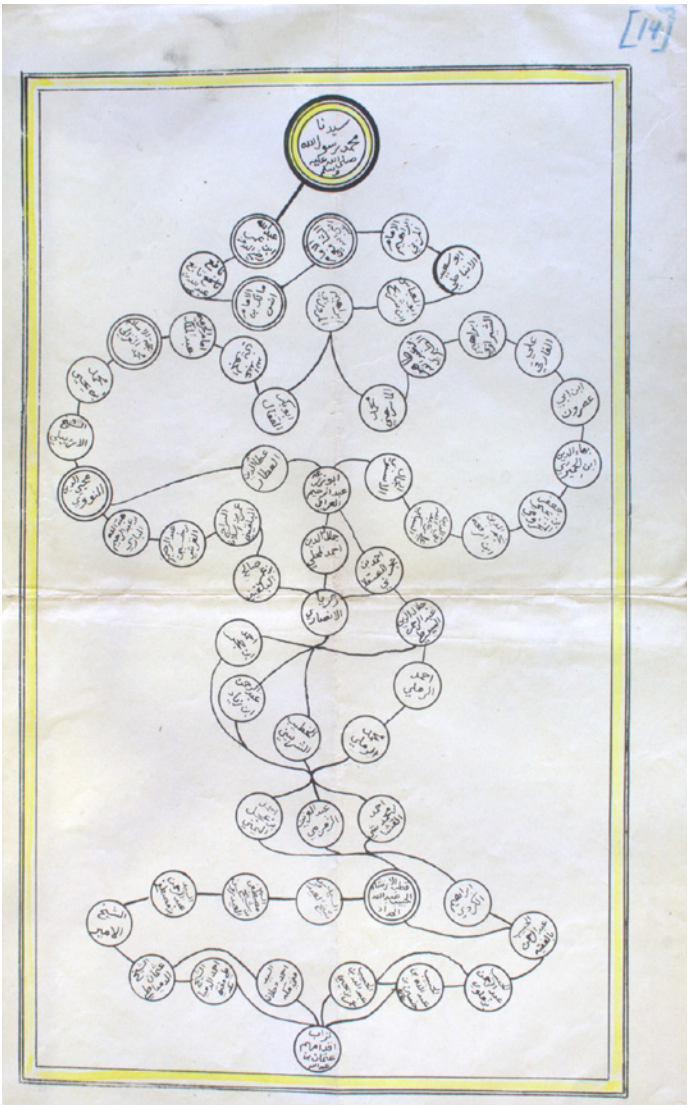

FIGURE 3 *Chart showing Sayyid ʻUthman's intellectual genealogy*
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Muhammad Saʻid Babasil (d. 1912) who became a good friend and who was later to become the most important assistant to Ahmad Dahlan and, upon his death in 1886, replaced him as *mufti*. In this capacity, Babasil also issued *fatwas* for Muslims in the Netherlands East Indies.[29] Sayyid ʻUthman also had contact with him in later phases of his life.

29 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Vier geschenken,' 265; Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâ'is*, 6, *passim.*

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Of Sayyid ʿUthman's other Meccan teachers, al-Habib Muhammad ibn Husayn al-Habshi (1798–1865) is also quite well known. He originated from Hadramaut and was educated by Hadrami, Yemeni, Syrian and Egyptian teachers and he spent some time as a wandering preacher in Hadramaut. Later, he settled in Mecca where he became the *mufti* of the Shafiʿis. In Mecca, he also taught his successor, Ahmad Dahlan.[30] Another Meccan teacher, Ahmad al-Dimyati, is mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* as one of Sayyid ʿUthman's teachers in Egypt, but this is apparently a mistake because he was a *mufti* in Mecca. He must have been a minor scholar, because I have not been able to find any information about him. The father of Sayyid ʿUthman, ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAqil, who is also counted among his teachers in the *Suluh Zaman* (p. 3) is also included in the chart containing the most extensive list of teachers.[31] As far as I know, he was not a scholar of standing, but he will have been mentioned among the teachers out of piety and respect.

The specific topics that Sayyid ʿUthman studied in Mecca are not mentioned; however, his later writings would suggest that he studied all branches of Islamic scholarship, with a focus on *fiqh*. After a stay of six years in Mecca, as a young man of 26 years old Sayyid ʿUthman moved to Hadramaut, arriving in 1847; and he was to live here for fifteen years.

## 5 Stay in Hadramaut (1847–1862)

As mentioned above, Hadramis in the diaspora kept an attachment to the homeland and, consequently, it was quite normal for boys and young men from the diaspora to be sent to the Hadramaut for shorter or longer periods of time, in order to study and to visit family members who had stayed behind in the homeland. Mobility between the diaspora and the Hadramaut was quite common and examples of these exchanges are readily available in all kinds of accounts.[32] The next phase of Sayyid ʿUthman's life fits well into this pattern and does not form an exception. There is little doubt that Sayyid ʿUthman would have felt like a Hadrami, fuelled by the stories of his father in Mecca and perhaps other Hadramis there. Indeed, the idea of going to the Hadramaut will have become so attractive to him that after a stay of seven years he left Mecca, longing to see the country of his forefathers.

Upon his arrival in Hadramaut in 1847, Sayyid ʿUthman was received by members of his family. It is not mentioned in which part of the Hadramaut he

30 Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 72; Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 116.

31 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 13.

32 Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*; Bang, *Sufis and scholars*; Ho, *Graves of Tarim*.

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settled down, but it might have been in Masilat Al Shaykh, where there was an important library of the Al Yahya,[33] and where his most important teacher lived, as we shall see shortly. In the period that Sayyid ʿUthman was in the Hadramaut (1847–1862) the situation was rather unstable from a political point of view. The region was divided among many rival tribes, who were permanently fighting each other or attacking the urban areas.[34]

As in Mecca, education in Hadramaut at the time was also informal and traditional. A student went to attend the lessons of a particular teacher who taught a single topic in a school (*madrasa*) or a mystical lodge (*zawiyya*) attached to a mosque. These lessons were open to students with different levels of knowledge; they were given in a flexible manner and when the student had mastered the book being taught he received a certificate (*ijaza*) and moved on to the following teacher. There were no educational institutions with a fully fledged and integrated curriculum. The subjects taught were Shafiʿi *fiqh*, Arabic grammar, *tafsir*, Hadith and other branches of Islamic learning using writings from the Hadrami scholarly tradition, as well as more classical scholars like the famous al-Ghazali ((d. 1111).[35]

We are well informed about Sayyid ʿUthman's teachers in Hadramaut. As we have seen above, the *Qamar al-zaman* (p. 5) mentions al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir (1777–1855), and the *Suluh zaman* (p. 4) adds an additional four: al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, al-Habib Hasan ibn Salih al-Bihr (1777–1856), al-Habib Muhammad ibn Tahir and al-Habib ʿAlwi ibn Saqqaf al-Jifri (d. 1856). All of these names are also mentioned in the most elaborated charts of Sayyid ʿUthman's teachers, discussed above. With the exception of Muhammad ibn Tahir, all of these names feature in the just mentioned document about Sayyid ʿUthman's scholarly credentials, which adds some other names to the list of his Hadrami teachers; namely, al-Habib Muhsin ibn ʿAlwi al-Saqqaf (1796–1873), al-Habib ʿAlwi ibn Zayn al-Habshi (dates unknown), the well-known mystic al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn Balfaqih (1783–1849) and al-Habib Ahmad Junayd (1783–1858).[36] As suggested by their title of address, al-Habib, all nine of these scholars belonged to the *sayyid* segment of society. In a number of recent studies on Hadramaut the names of Sayyid ʿUthman's Hadrami teachers occur prominently and we can deduce that these teachers were among the leading scholars of the first half of the nineteenth century in that part of the world. These scholars, some of whom were quite wealthy, were

33 Alatas, *Beknopt overzicht*, 50.

34 Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 61–77.

35 Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 61–62.

36 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, 1–7.

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in touch with each other and formed a loosely connected group through friendly, familial and scholarly ties, e.g. as teacher and pupil.[37]

The scholar who likely played the most prominent role in the education of Sayyid ʿUthman in Hadramaut is ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir, who was known as a scholar who advocated the opinion that the Shariʿa should be strictly followed and local customs (*ʿada*) should be strongly rejected.[38] In 1892, Sayyid ʿUthman printed his teacher's book, *al-Ahadith al-jamiʿa fi ʿulum al-nafiʿa*, which Ibn Tahir had finished writing in 1844. On the title page of this book Ibn Tahir is called 'our teacher' (*guru kami*). Another source also underlines the importance of ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir for Sayyid ʿUthman. In the previously mentioned credentials of Sayyid ʿUthman, which preceded his 1911 work *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, there are three lines of a prayer that Ibn Tahir had made for Sayyid ʿUthman when he awarded him the *ijaza*.[39] These lines are dated May 1850 and read as follows:

> Best wishes to you, ʿUthman, may you be successful in giving right guidance and showing the praised path (*al-maslak al-mahmud*) both in actions and in intentions, and [may you be successful] in scholarship and in teaching, as well as in piety and in the right way, and in the manner that pleases the Peerless One, the bright and pure way of the Messenger of God, the orthodox way that leads to the Garden of Eternity.[40]

I have been able to retrace this prayer in the work of Ibn Tahir and, in fact, this is the only Hadrami source known to me that contains information on the life of Sayyid ʿUthman and which is contemporary to the period.[41] This occasion, marked by this prayer, was apparently a source of great pride to Sayyid ʿUthman, because towards the very end of his life he would refer to it again.

Another scholar who stands out among these Hadrami teachers is ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar ibn Yahya. This scholar died in 1849, so Sayyid ʿUthman would have studied under him for only a short time. A collection of his *fatwas*

37 Hartwig, *Hyderabad*, 89–98; Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 57–76; Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 96–119, with an instructive diagram on p. 110.

38 Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjèhers*, II, 302–304; Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 109–111.

39 In contemporary education with a fixed curriculum, this would have been the occasion of his graduation.

40 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, 1. Later, in 1900, this prayer seems to have evoked jealousy among Arabs in Batavia, see Sayyid ʿUthman, *Sadd al-bab*, 22.

41 Perhaps further research of Hadrami sources would reveal more information on Sayyid ʿUthman. The original prayer is longer and can be found in the *Diwan* of ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir, *Majmuʿ*, 281–282.

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is preserved in manuscript form in Leiden University Library. From these *fatwas* it appeared that he had been active in Southeast Asia, for instance in Pulau Penang, where he arrived in 1832, and in Batavia.[42] Many of the issues that Sayyid ʿUthman would be confronted with later in his career had also been dealt with in this collection of *fatwas*; for instance, the duplication of the Friday mosque, the marriage of a *sayyid* daughter to a *non-sayyid*, the occurrence of *dabus*[43] in Batavia, and the *ʿAshura'* festival.[44] In addition, the position of Muslims who reside under an infidel government is addressed. ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar takes a quite liberal view on this matter: if Muslims imitate their colonial ruler in dress and speech, for instance, they do not automatically become unbelievers; such things are allowed as long as no religious commitment on the part of the Muslim is involved.[45] This *fatwa* collection of ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar was a beacon for Sayyid ʿUthman and, throughout his career, he quoted from it.

In her excellent monograph on Hadrami networks in East Africa from 2003, Anne Bang stresses the link between higher learning and the ʿAlawiyya *tariqa* in Hadramaut. She also shows that in the first half of the nineteenth century, Islam in Hadramaut emphasized personal piety, morality in daily life, puritanism and an outspoken activism and missionary zeal. This puritanism had developed through the inner dynamics of Islam in Hadramaut and differed from the puritanism of the originator of the Wahhabi teachings, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab (1703–1792), in that it did not reject more popular practices, like saint worship, grave visits and *mawlid* celebrations.[46] It is precisely this particular type of religiosity to which Sayyid ʿUthman was exposed in Hadramaut that formed the essential characteristics of his career. An interesting illustration of this religiosity can be found in one of his later books from 1911 (in Arabic), entitled *Fasl al-khitab fi bayan al-sawab*, 'The decisive speech on the

42 ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, *Fatawi*, 300, 452.

43 This is a particular type of invulnerability ritual, see Vredenbregt, 'Dabus.'

44 This festival commemorates the martyrdom of Husayn, see E.I. (2), vii, 464, s.v. Muharram.

45 ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, *Fatawi*, 66, 325, 452–458, 470–478, 505–506. This manuscript was copied by one of the sons of Sayyid ʿUthman. In addition to the date on which he ended the copying at the end of Shawwal 1316 (= March 1899), his full name as Yahya ibn ʿUthman ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAqil ibn Yahya is given (p. 540).

46 Bang, *Sufis and scholars*, 73–75; 142; 148–150. For the differences between him and Sayyid ʿUthman's teacher Ahmad Dahlan, who approved of saint worship, see Bang, *Sufis and scholars*: 71; 134. The teachings of Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab foreshadowed the purifying efforts of the later Egyptian reformists of the *al-Manar* group in Egypt, see Chapter Six.

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obvious truth.' In a chapter written to prove the recommendable (*mustahabb*) character of grave visits, Sayyid ʿUthman recalled:

> I have often witnessed that our respectable teachers who belonged to the ʿAlawi *ʿulama'*, like al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir, al-Habib Hasan ibn Salih al-Bihr, al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar ibn Yahya, al-Habib Ahmad Junayd and others, visited the graves of our ancestors and others. They did so in perfect manners, staying there for a long time reciting the Qur'an and prayers, supplicating to Almighty God that He would accept their prayers and make their requests successful, without performing anything which the Shariʿa forbids, like the rubbing (*tamassuh*) of the tombstones of the graves and the throwing oneself to the ground (*tamarrugh*), as some common believers do. Nor did they consider a person who did this an unbeliever.

This passage is noteworthy, because it shows that grave visits were completely accepted among the religious establishment in Hadramaut and that not only Sayyid ʿUthman, but also the great *ʿulama'* participated in these activities.[47] Moreover, at the same time, the passage underlines the more puritan concern of remaining within the limits of the Law.

Apart from studying in Hadramaut, Sayyid ʿUthman also developed a family life there. When he arrived there in 1847 he was 26 years old and the *Qamar al-zaman* and the *Suluh zaman* relate that Sayyid ʿUthman's teachers encouraged him to get married. Moreover, the *Suluh zaman* (p. 4) informs us that his wife was a *sharifa* originating from the Ibn Sahl family.[48] The name of this wife is not known. We can assume that the marriage lasted a long time, because when Sayyid ʿUthman resettled in Batavia in 1862 he still had a wife in Hadramaut.[49] A number of children originated from this union, but it is not known to me exactly how many. A son is mentioned in two letters that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote to C. Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden, dated 30 October 1886 and 4 January

47 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Fasl al-khitab*, 41. This confirms the opinion of Knysh, 'The cult of saints,' 203–205 that the cult of saints in Hadramaut never formed an issue for debate prior to the twentieth century.

48 Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 133–35 mentions a certain Husayn ibn Sahl (1798–1858) who had made a fortune in Kalimantan. Could he have been the father-in-law of Sayyid ʿUthman? In his recent PhD thesis, Ahwan Fanani mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman married in Hadramaut with a woman from the Jamal al-Layl family, and from this marriage at least two sons were born, ʿAlwi and ʿAqil. However, his sources for this are not clear, see Fanani, 'Fikih hubungan,' 155.

49 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 426, n. 2.

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1887.[50] In the first letter Sayyid ʿUthman mentions a son in Hadramaut who he corresponds with and who he has asked to look into Arabian epigraphy to assist the research of Snouck Hurgronje. In the second letter he mentions that his son has not been able to find any information. The name of the son is not mentioned, but it may well be ʿAlwi, who was the oldest son and was born in Hadramaut;[51] it could also be another son called Muhammad.[52] According to the family tradition, there was also a daughter, called Sharifa Fatima. She would later marry a son of ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir, and a son from this marriage, called Muhammad ibn Hashim, would become a fierce opponent of Sayyid ʿUthman, as we will see in Chapter Six.[53] Apart from this, nothing more is known about Sayyid ʿUthman's family life in Hadramaut.

## 6 Travels in the Middle East (1855–1856)

According to both the *Suluh zaman* (pp. 4–7) and the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanzas 34–70), Sayyid ʿUthman's stay in Hadramaut was interrupted for about a year in 1855 when he travelled to various places in the Middle East. It is to this journey that I will turn now. According to these sources, Sayyid ʿUthman came up with the idea to leave Hadramaut after a number of his teachers had died. Certainly, the year 1855 was when his teacher ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir passed away, while two of his other teachers, Hasan ibn Salih al-Bihr and ʿAlwi ibn Saqqaf al-Jifri had died in the previous year.

The outline of the journey in these two biographical accounts runs as follows: Initially, he set out for Mecca, since he was longing to see his father and brother in the Holy City again. Subsequently, he went to Medina, where he made a 'visit' (*ziyarah*) to the grave of his most important relative, the Prophet Muhammad. Moreover, he spent some time studying there with, amongst others, Muhammad al-ʿAzb. After the Hejaz, Sayyid ʿUthman went to Egypt where he visited the relatives from his mother's side in the city of Damietta. All in all,

50 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje, 1883–1912' and 'Letter to C. Snouck Hurgronje, January 1887.'

51 Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 105.

52 Interview with M.A. Alaydrus, Jakarta, 20 November 2006. This son was later known as a teacher in Hadramaut, e.g. to Muhammad ibn Hashim, see Muh. ibn Hashim, *al-Dawr al-kafi*, 11. Muhammad is also mentioned amongst the seven (sic) sons that Sayyid ʿUthman had when he died, see Muhammad ibn Yahya, *Kitab sharaf al-mahya*, 11 s.v. ʿUthman ibn ʿAbd Allah. I thank the Hadrami historian ʿAli ibn Anis al-Kaff for sending me a digital copy of this.

53 ʿAbd al-Qadir, *Genealogical chart.*

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he stayed for eight months, and during this period he married a relative. It is also reported that he studied in Egypt with Ahmad al-Dimyati. After Egypt, it is claimed that he travelled to Tunis where he stayed in the house of the Ottoman Vizier. It appears that he stayed there for a period of five months, during which he studied with the Great Mufti who lived in the village of Qabis. Next, Sayyid ʿUthman visited Algiers and Fez, where he stayed for seven months. In addition, the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 49) mentions that he visited Marrakesh. Finally, Sayyid ʿUthman departed from Tangier to Istanbul with a Turkish ship. It is claimed that the boat made a stopover of two nights and one day in Marseille in southern France and here Sayyid ʿUthman saw the remnants of an old mosque as well as some roof tiles (*genteng*) of red and yellow stone, dating from the period that the city was still under Muslim control. Via Malta, Cyprus and Crete he finally reached Istanbul. In Istanbul he took residence in Hotel Byzance, and from there he visited the Ottoman Vizier to hand over to him a letter from the Pasha of Medina. In Istanbul he also met with the Shaykh al-Islam, with whom he studied for three months. It is reported he also visited the important sites of this city, in particular the museum housing a number of artefacts originating from the Prophet, including a weapon, a flag and a sandal. After travelling to Jerusalem and a visit to the Masjid al-Aqsa, Sayyid ʿUthman returned to Hadramaut where he would stay until 1862, the year he left for Batavia. Via the port of Shihr in Hadramaut, and after a brief sojourn in Singapore, he finally arrived in Batavia in August 1862, where he would spend the rest of his life.

Little of this journey of Sayyid ʿUthman, as presented in the *Qamar al-zaman* and the *Suluh zaman*, can be confirmed by other sources. According to L.W.C. van den Berg,[54] Sayyid ʿUthman, visited Egypt, Tunis, Jerusalem and Constantinople in addition to his stay in Mecca and Hadramaut, but this information is not further specified or substantiated. On the whole, these travel accounts do not seem very reliable. In the section on his teachers above, two teachers in Medina are mentioned, al-Habib ʿUmat ibn ʿAbd Allah al-Jazi and Shaykh Muhammad al-ʿAzb. The first one is unknown to me, but the latter scholar can be identified as the author of a devotional text on the life of the Prophet Muhammad, a so-called *mawlid*-text,[55] which was also printed by Sayyid ʿUthman.[56]

Likewise, reports of his visit to his relatives in Egypt and his marriage there cannot be confirmed and the remark in the *Qamar al-zaman* that he studied

54 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 164.

55 GAL, SII, 815. This text is still popular in present-day Indonesia, Kaptein, 'The *berdiri mawlid* issue.'

56 Yahya ibn ʿUthman, *Daftar*, nr. 33.

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there with Ahmad al-Dimyati is evidently wrong, because this scholar was based in Mecca. Undoubtedly, this was mentioned to substantiate the reference to the city of Damietta. Furthermore, the account of his Tunisian stay remains vague, as well as his studies with the Great Mufti. In the list of teachers, two from Tunis are mentioned; namely, Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Jawwad and Ahmad ibn Mansur, neither of whom could be identified.[57] Nothing is known about Sayyid ʿUthman's stay in Morocco other than what is reported in the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman*. The boat trip to Istanbul with the stopover in Marseille makes nice reading, but seems to be forged. At least, I was not able to find any information of ruins of mosques in Marseille. In particular, his visit to Istanbul seems to have been included to increase his authority among pro-Ottoman and Pan-Islamist readers of both the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* and it is safe to conclude that this, too, may have been forged to show that despite criticism in the Ottoman press and by the Ottoman consul in Batavia (cf. Chapter Five), the relationship between Sayyid ʿUthman and the highest Ottoman authorities was excellent. The Hotel Byzance in which Sayyid ʿUthman is claimed to have stayed, looks more appropriate for Western travellers than for a traditional Muslim scholar like Sayyid ʿUthman. The information on the museum is amusing and shows an awareness of the presence of some artefacts related to the life of the Prophet being kept in Istanbul; however, this information could easily have been gleaned from a travel book. Finally, it is also not possible to corroborate his visit to Jerusalem with other sources.

We must conclude, therefore, that while this part of his life makes nice reading, contrary to other parts of the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman*, it is not very reliable from a historical point of view. The reason why these parts are included in the biographical accounts of Sayyid ʿUthman undoubtedly had to do with the circumstances, i.e. that many eminent Hadramis were known to have made extensive journeys beyond the homeland and the Holy Land and, in this respect, it was good for Sayyid ʿUthman to be seen to have done the same as his famous predecessors. Moreover, by linking him to internationally important figures like the Shaykh al-Islam in Istanbul and others, the prestige of Sayyid ʿUthman was greatly enhanced. As previously mentioned, the commercial aspect also plays a role here. Examining various sales catalogues of the works of Sayyid ʿUthman, we see that the international prestige of Sayyid ʿUthman was also exploited to promote the sale of his works.[58]

57 They are not mentioned in the well-known mid-nineteenth century history of Tunisian *'ulama'*, written by Ibn Abi l-Diyaf, *Ithaf ahl al-zaman*.

58 Yahya ibn ʿUthman, *Daftar*, 3.

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## 7 Conclusion

In this chapter a number of formative influences have come to the fore, which shaped Sayyid ʿUthman for the rest of his life. As we have seen, Sayyid Uthman was raised in Batavia in a religious milieu by his Egyptian grandfather who was a religious teacher with a wide reputation and who also gave him his primary religious education. Moreover, in his early youth Sayyid ʿUthman also became acquainted with the Malay scholarly tradition in Batavia.

When he was 19 years old, Sayyid ʿUthman left for the Middle East, where he would stay for more than twenty years, about seven years in Mecca and the remaining time in Hadramaut. During this period, Sayyid ʿUthman became part of a large international spiritual and scholarly network. In Mecca, he was mainly educated by the famous Ahmad Dahlan who advocated a strict adherence to Islamic law, but who denounced the puritanical interpretation of Islam by the Wahhabis; for instance, leaving room for practices like saint worship. In Hadramaut, Sayyid ʿUthman was educated within the learned intellectual tradition of the region with its puritan and activist tendencies and a stress on individual piety. Thanks to this education in Mecca and Hadramaut, Sayyid ʿUthman gained solid knowledge of all branches of Islamic scholarship, which he was ready to pass on to the Muslim population of the Netherlands East Indies. Moreover, the activist and puritan brand of Islam he had been trained in was to become the main point of reference for his later life.

After these formative years in Mecca and Hadramaut, Sayyid ʿUthman returned to his native Batavia in 1862 at the age of forty. In the next chapter his activities in the Netherlands East Indies will be dealt with, from his arrival in Batavia in 1862 until approximately 1885.

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CHAPTER 3

# Serving the Muslim Community: Scholar and Publisher in Batavia (1862–1885)

## 1 Introduction

This chapter examines the life of Sayyid ʿUthman in the years after he settled in Batavia in 1862 until 1885. I have chosen the year 1885 as it was around this time that Sayyid ʿUthman became an object of debate within the circles of the Dutch colonial administration, before he eventually entered into the service of the government in 1889. Moreover, it appears that 1885 was the year when there was a shift in Sayyid ʿUthman's activities, from teaching to writing.[1]

The earliest activities of Sayyid ʿUthman after his return from the Middle East are mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* and the *Suluh zaman.* According to the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 65), Sayyid ʿUthman returned to the Netherlands East Indies because he longed for his birthplace. This may well have played a role in his considerations, but his mother and his grandfather had died and it seems, in fact, that there was not much to return to. Although I have seen no indication of this, it is possible that Sayyid ʿUthman had become disillusioned with Hadramaut, having failed to make his mark as a prominent scholar there. According to the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 69), Sayyid ʿUthman's return to Batavia in 1862 was met with great pomp and circumstance by his family. This claim is questionable as there were not many members – if any at all – of the Al Yahya in Batavia, although there may have been some family members from his mother's side. The only thing known is that upon his arrival in Batavia, Sayyid ʿUthman met with a half Malay, half Arab son of a relative (*seanak saudarahnya*) from his mother's family. Furthermore, he visited the graves of his grandfather, grandmother and mother in Petamburan. Hereafter, he travelled to Surabaya to see his elder brother, Sayyid Hashim, who as a child had been taken by his father from Batavia to Mecca, but who had apparently returned to the Netherlands East Indies and settled in Surabaya.[2]

1 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 164.

2 *Suluh zaman*, 8. Hardly anything is known about this brother, but it seems that he was active in Surabaya as a scholar around 1891; al-ʿAttas, *al-Durar al-bahiya*, 4–5, includes an approval (*taqriz*) given by him.

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## 2 Earliest Activities in Batavia

It is mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* that after Sayyid ʿUthman settled in Batavia many people approached him with requests for teaching. The *Suluh zaman* (p. 8) elaborates that he accepted these requests, albeit reluctantly:

> In fact, I do not belong to the great *'ulama'* and I do not possess much knowledge, but only a little, which I got from my teachers, together with their blessing. But in case someone would like to get the blessing of my teachers, I will comply with this wish as best as I can.

Both the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 75–83) and the parallel passages of the *Suluh zaman* relate that Sayyid ʿUthman started to teach on an irregular basis and that he did this for the sake of Allah and not for the salary. I think that these remarks about this initial unwillingness to teach and the refusal to take a salary are designed to underline the protagonist's humility and virtuous character. However, it seems that Sayyid ʿUthman had no income upon his return to Batavia, and so it is reasonable to conclude that, in reality, this teaching will have formed a major, or perhaps the only, source of earnings. Consequently, it was fortuitous that Haji ʿAbd al-Ghani Bima, who was old and no longer able to teach for health reasons, asked Sayyid ʿUthman to replace him in his teaching position at the mosque of Pekojan.[3] In the 1850s, Haji ʿAbd al-Ghani Bima had been one of the leading scholars in the Jawi colony in Mecca, but apparently had returned to the archipelago in his old age. Taking up this opportunity, Sayyid ʿUthman taught on a regular basis and the number of his pupils started to grow. Later, he was also asked by a certain Haji ʿAbd al-Muʿin to teach in the mosque of Pasar Senin in Kampong Besar.[4]

Thus, shortly after his return to Batavia, Sayyid ʿUthman's position as a teacher was well established. Both the *Suluh zaman* and the *Qamar al-zaman* emphasise that he was very strict in upholding the rules of religion in his teaching, and that he shunned anyone who falsely claimed expertise in Islamic matters or who used religion for their own material gain. There is not much known about Sayyid ʿUthman's pupils. This is largely because teaching was not to be the main focus of his career. Nevertheless, there is some information available on a number of pupils, the best known being ʿAli al-Habshi (1870–1968), who left for Hadramaut at the age of ten; prior to this he had followed the lessons of

3 *Qamar al-zaman*, stanzas 77–79.This person originated from the island of Sumbawa and used to teach in the Jawa colony in Mecca, Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 262–263.

4 *Suluh zaman*, 9. I do not know anything about this person.

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Sayyid ʿUthman.[5] Apart from this boy, there is information on only a few other pupils from the entire period of Sayyid ʿUthman's career. Those known by name are Sayyid ʿAlwi ibn ʿAbd ʿAllah al-Salabiyah al-ʿAydarus (d. 1951), who arrived in Batavia from Hadramaut in 1883 and who married a granddaughter of Sayyid ʿUthman;[6] Habib Muhammad ibn ʿAlwi ibn ʿUmar ibn Ahmad al-Salabiyyah al-ʿAydarus (1852–1915);[7] Guru Marzuq Muara (b. 1876), who studied with Sayyid ʿUthman from his sixteenth year;[8] Muhammad ibn Hasan ibn Ahmad ibn ʿAydid who was taught from 1887–1891;[9] and Haji Muhammad Hasan (1883–1951), who would later become Chief *penghulu* of Batavia.[10]

The uncompromising attitude of Sayyid ʿUthman is illustrated by the first, second and third tribulations of the *Qamar al-zaman*. All three events are dated and intended to give additional information about Sayyid ʿUthman's early years in Batavia. The first tribulation relates to an alleged charlatan from the Holy City who tries to deceive the local Muslim population by pretending to be a *sayyid* and by selling amulets, but who is recognized by Sayyid ʿUthman as a freed slave whom Sayyid ʿUthman had met frequently in the Holy City. The second tribulation narrates the tale of another impostor who claims to be a representative of the Banu Shayba, the traditional doorkeepers of the Kaʿba in Mecca, and in this capacity tries to raise money among the indigenous population in order to restore the Kaʿba which was supposedly in a state of ruin. As in the previous case, Sayyid ʿUthman exposes the individual and, so we are told, he even whipped him. The third tribulation relates a similar kind of story in which another fake *sayyid* claims to possess saintly qualities and pretends to reach religious ecstasy during the ceremonial reciting of the life story of the Prophet Muhammad, the *mawlid*. Again, this person is exposed as a charlatan by Sayyid ʿUthman.[11]

As mentioned, all three cases are dated to the years 1866, 1871, and 1878, respectively; but these data could not be corroborated with other sources. Certainly, there is a kernel of historical truth in them, in the sense that Sayyid ʿUthman functioned as a guardian of the true faith and from time to time may well have exposed a number of religious charlatans. We can assume that the

5 Alatas, 'Becoming Indonesians,' 54; al-ʿAttas, *Taj al-aʿras*, II, 179 mentions that he remained a pupil of Sayyid ʿUthman until his death in 1914.

6 Letter to the author in February 2007 from Mr. M.A. Alaydrus in Jakarta. This Sayyid ʿAlwi was the father of Mr. Alaydrus.

7 Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 204.

8 Anon., '22 Ulama Betawi,' 13.

9 Muhammad ibn Yahya, *Kitab sharaf al-mahya*, 3.

10 Pijper, 'De panghulu's van Java,' 87.

11 *Qamar al-zaman*, stanzas 84–93; 94–108, and 109–123.

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author of the *Qamar al-zaman* attached these dates to the stories, not least because later on, when Sayyid ʿUthman's life is better documented, these episodes are also dated. Furthermore, these dates close the gap in time between the return of Sayyid ʿUthman to Batavia in 1862 and the fourth tribulation (1885), the date of which is correct, as will be shown in the next chapter.

These passages from the *Qamar al-zaman* are, therefore, not very reliable from a historical point of view, but they form a nice and often humorous illustration of popular Islamic practices at the time while simultaneously underlining the unbending character of Sayyid ʿUthman in applying and propagating the rules of religion in daily life. Most importantly, they make clear that directly after his settlement in Batavia, Sayyid ʿUthman became involved in teaching and guarding what he considered pure Islam. A final, and notable, point is that in all three stories Sayyid ʿUthman involves the state authorities in order to get rid of the evildoers, which shows that he clearly saw a role for the rulers in administrating and managing religion.

## 3 Printing and the Lithographic Press of Sayyid ʿUthman

From 1869 onwards, Sayyid ʿUthman started using a lithographic printing press to spread his views and this enables us to present a picture of Sayyid ʿUthman's activities that is more historically reliable than we have been able to do thus far. The establishment of this press was of vital importance to the career of Sayyid ʿUthman, not only for the dissemination of his ideas among the native people, but also because it greatly promoted his visibility in Dutch colonial circles.

As a technique of printing, lithography became popular in Southeast Asia in the first half of the nineteenth century, because it was cheap and flexible and, for this reason, made it possible to print books in Chinese and Arabic characters. Although the technique of lithography had already been introduced in Batavia in 1829 by the British missionary W.H. Medhurst (1796–1857),[12] it took until 1848 before the first lithographed book was published by an indigenous printer. In the history of printing in Southeast Asia this was a major event, not least because for a long time printing in this part of the world had been exclusively in the hands of colonial governments and missionary institutions. Indeed, it took until 1848 for indigenous printers to start working independently from this European controlled sphere. The first indigenously produced book was a Qur'an and was printed in Palembang by a certain Muhammad al-Azhari,

12 Proudfoot, 'Lithography,' 113.

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who had bought his lithographic press in Singapore.[13] Some years later, in 1853, there was an Arab printer active in Surabaya, by the name of Husayn ibn Muhammad ibn al-Husayn al-Habshi.[14] These printing activities fell within the period 1848–1856, a time when the Dutch government had temporarily allowed freedom of the press. After this period, Dutch press regulations became more restrictive again and this may account for the virtual absence of native printers in the nineteenth century in the Netherlands East Indies. Although the government wanted to curtail the spread of Muslim printed books, these were readily available, originating from Cairo, Mecca, Singapore and India.[15]

As Francis Robinson and others have pointed out, the rise of print culture within Muslim civilization was a phenomenon that had contradictory and uninvited consequences: on the one hand, it enabled the *'ulama'* to spread their works on a much larger scale than simply the circles of their immediate pupils; on the other hand, it also enabled people to study these writings independently and outside the direct sphere of the teacher. This affected the traditional teacher-pupil relationship and eroded the traditional religious authority of the *'ulama'*. This explains why, at times, opposition against printing arose within *'ulama'* circles and why a preference for oral transmission of knowledge lingered on, even after the introduction of printing, for instance by the famous Bulaq Press in Cairo at the beginning of the nineteenth century.[16]

As mentioned, the first time we see Sayyid 'Uthman active in printing is in 1869. What motivated Sayyid 'Uthman to take up this activity is not clear. From time to time, at least in his later works, we see that Sayyid 'Uthman was aware of the aforementioned opposition to printing and he emphasised the importance of having a teacher to supervise students.[17] However, he will also have realised that larger audiences for his ideas could be reached through the medium of printing. It is likely, too, that he was interested in printing as a means of income. Whatever the case, once Sayyid 'Uthman started to print, he continued for the rest of his life.

At the time Sayyid 'Uthman began printing he had already been in Batavia for seven years and it seems likely, therefore, that he did not bring the press with him from his travels. It is not known where Sayyid 'Uthman got his press from, but perhaps, like the above mentioned Muhammad al-Azhari from Palembang, he obtained it from Singapore. Another issue is how Sayyid

13 Peeters, 'Palembang revisited.'

14 Kaptein, 'An Arab printer.'

15 Proudfoot, 'Early Muslim printing,' 217, 220.

16 Robinson, 'Technique and religious change.'

17 Sayyid 'Uthman, *I'anat al-mustarshidin*, 105; Sayyid 'Uthman, *Tariq al-salama*, 8–9.

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'Uthman learned to operate the press, because when we compare the handwriting in his personal letters with the products of his press it is clear that he did this himself. We do not know how he learned the skill, but it is very possible that he was an autodidact. Whatever the case, Sayyid 'Uthman must undoubtedly have had a talent for lithography, because the first products of his press make a skilful impression and we also see that, over time, he refines his skills.

Another important issue related to Sayyid 'Uthman's printing press is how he managed to run it in spite of suppressive government regulations. Ian Proudfoot suggests that Sayyid 'Uthman was able to do so, because as 'the government *mufti*' he operated more or less under licence.[18] This suggestion is, however, not sustainable. Firstly, Sayyid 'Uthman had already started to print long before he became an ally of the Dutch government, and there is no proof of a special deal between him and the government, neither in this early period, nor later.

The first time the activities and scope of Sayyid 'Uthman's printing press became known to a Western audience was in 1886 in a book written by the previously mentioned L.W.C. van den Berg. From 1870 to 1887, Van den Berg was attached to the colonial government in various functions and from 1878 onwards he was a researcher in the field of indigenous languages and advisor to the colonial administration in the field of Islamic law. He held this position until his return to the Netherlands in 1887, when he became a professor at the training college for Dutch colonial civil servants in Delft.[19] The Governor General commissioned Van den Berg to write a book about the Arab population in the colony in order to gain a better insight into this group and, in particular, into whether or not this group functioned as a link with Pan-Islamist developments in the Middle East and, as such, was a potential threat to colonial rule. The result was the well-known *Le Hadramout et les colonies arabes dans l'Archipel Indien*, which appeared in 1886. In this book, Van den Berg mentions that Sayyid 'Uthman owned a lithographic press and had recently given up teaching in order to devote himself entirely to writing. At the time, Sayyid 'Uthman already had 38 publications to his name.[20] Most of the publications mentioned by Van den Berg have been preserved.

In the next section, I will rely upon these publications in order to obtain an insight into the activities of Sayyid 'Uthman during the period dealt with in this chapter. These publications can be roughly categorised into two types. First, there are brochures and books that find their origin in various

18 Proudfoot, 'Early Muslim printing,' 220.

19 Frederiks and Van den Branden, 'Mr. Lodewijk Willem Christiaan van den Berg.'

20 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 164–167.

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controversies that occurred in society and which Sayyid ʿUthman became involved in as an expert in Islamic jurisprudence. Some of these writings are *fatwas* or an expansion of a *fatwa*. Second, there are books of a more scholarly nature. Sometimes these give a systematic theoretical elaboration of a particular issue that had emerged in society, although without making a reference to a particular event. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman also wrote works of a more general nature, such as manuals for the pilgrimage, devotional texts, and socio-ethical treatises. I am aware that the division of Sayyid ʿUthman's works into these two categories is rather arbitrary and, at times, it is indeed difficult to classify a particular writing. However, for reasons of structuring this chapter, I have made this classification. The first group of publications provides greater insight into Sayyid ʿUthman's position as a leader in Muslim society, while the second type provides more information on his scholarly activities. In the next section I will deal with the first type of publication.

## 4 Controversies

These publications make clear that Sayyid ʿUthman was regularly involved in controversial issues. Sometimes he interfered on his own initiative, while in other cases he was approached by others to give his opinion on certain matters, sometimes in the form of a *fatwa*. I deal with these controversies in this section in the order of publication of the pertinent texts, although in reality different issues might have occurred at the same time, or may have been raised more than once. Whatever the case, together these issues give a good insight into the controversies that occurred in the Muslim community of the Netherlands East Indies.

### *The Establishment of the New Moon*

The first documented instance of an issue in which Sayyid ʿUthman was involved dates from the end of 1868 and deals with the fixing of the precise date of the beginning and the end of the fast in the month of Ramadan. This issue frequently constitutes a problem in Muslim communities and societies, even today, because there is no agreement about which method should be followed to establish this date. Often this issue is used to express opposition to state authorities by deliberately not following the date that has been fixed by the state, and instead adopting an alternative date, one day earlier or later.[21]

21 In the late colonial period the government recognized the end of Ramadan as an official holiday (*ʿid al-fitr*), but in line with the policy of non-interference in religious matters, it

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There had been such a disagreement in Batavia in 1868, when the month of Ramadan started around 16 December. One group advocated the use of *ru'ya*, which is the actual 'sighting' of the new moon to determine when the new month had started, while another group used the method of *hisab*, which is the 'calculation' of the new date by means of astronomical tables. In this case, Sayyid 'Uthman was asked to explain what the *'ulama'* had written about this and, consequently, he had written a book, called *al-Qawl al-sawab*, 'The right statement'.[22] In this booklet, Sayyid 'Uthman explained that, according to the Shari'a, one should not use the principle of *hisab* to determine the beginning of the fast. This booklet led to an agreement among the two parties and, for a period of approximately 14 years no disagreement on the issue flared up again. However, in the year 1882 a related problem arose, this time because there was contradictory evidence from different witnesses concerning the sighting of the new moon: one witness had not seen it, while another had seen it, although this was impossible according to calculations. Following the disagreement, Sayyid 'Uthman was once more consulted for an explanation.[23]

This request led to the writing of a Malay work bearing the Arabic title *Tawdih al-adilla 'ala shurut shuhud al-ahilla*, 'The explanation of the proofs for the conditions that witnesses of the new moons should fulfil,' which was published in 1882. Although Sayyid 'Uthman had explained the issue in the aforementioned earlier work, this was apparently not properly understood because it was written in Arabic. For this reason, he re-wrote the work in Malay. In this work, Sayyid 'Uthman presents a lot of quotations from authoritative Shafi'i sources on the issue, including the *Tuhfa* of Ibn Hajar al-Haytami (d. 1567),[24] and he clarifies that the Shari'a only recognizes the use of *hisab* to establish the *possibility* of actually seeing the new moon. However, the calculation itself cannot be regarded as a valid method to decide that the new moon has arrived, because this may only be done by actual sighting. Moreover, he describes in detail the right procedure for the *ru'ya* method and the conditions the witnesses should fulfil in order to produce a valid testimony of the appearance of the new moon. These conditions are very strict and in case not all of those have been complied with, the testimony cannot be accepted. It implies, for instance,

granted a two-day holiday for this festival in order not to get involved in determining the right day, see Bousquet, *La politique musulmane*, 29.

22 The booklet was not available to me and is apparently lost. It is not mentioned in the bibliographical overview by Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 164–167. Perhaps the work had never been printed and had only circulated in manuscript.

23 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Tawdih al-adilla*, 1.

24 This work is one of the standard manuals for Shafi'i *fiqh*, see Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 373–375.

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that the witness should see the new moon with his eyes and not with the help of instruments, like a telescope (*keker*, from Dutch *kijker*[25]). The work ends in a call to people who are able to understand the issue properly to clarify this with other people whenever necessary in order to avoid unrest (*fitna*).[26]

### *The Duplication of Friday Mosques*

The date for the previous controversy was based on evidence taken from Sayyid ʿUthman's later publications, but the date for the next controversy is based on a printed text authored by Sayyid ʿUthman in 1869, which is the oldest printed text by Sayyid ʿUthman in existence. The text is written in Arabic and deals with the issue of the duplication of Friday mosques (*taʿaddud*). The background to the issue is that, according to the Shariʿa, the communal Friday prayer (*salat al-jumʿa*) can only be performed in one particular Friday mosque, the Cathedral Mosque, specifically designated for this task within a territory. However, in practice this prayer service often took place in various places of worship at the same time within a territory, and it was about this issue that the expertise of Sayyid ʿUthman was called upon.

The book that resulted from his involvement is called *al-Ajwiba ʿala masaʾil al-jumʿa*, 'The answers on questions on the Friday mosque' and is kept in manuscript at Leiden University Library. Although in manuscript form, the text indicates that it was copied from a print made in June 1869.[27] At the beginning of the text, Sayyid ʿUthman remarks that he was often consulted about all kinds of questions related to this issue of duplication. The subject includes all kinds of sub-questions, like how should the boundaries of the territory in which the Friday prayer should take place be determined; should a preacher (*khatib*) be present or not; if the regular midday prayer (*salat al-zuhr*) is performed after the Friday prayer (*salat al-jumʿa*), should this still be regarded as the forbidden *taʿaddud*, and so forth. It is mentioned that this issue had also occurred in Batavia in the first half of the nineteenth century, when Sayyid ʿUthman's Hadrami teacher Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar had arrived in Batavia. Together with a certain ʿAbd al-Majid, the head of the town (*raʾis al-balad*), Habib ʿAbd Allah had tried to designate one single mosque for the Friday service, but had not succeeded (p. 6). In his book on this issue, Sayyid ʿUthman quotes not only Habib ʿAbd Allah, but also a number of Shafiʿi authorities, including al-Nawawi

25 In 1873, A.C. Oudemans published a school textbook, entitled *Ilmoe alam of wereldbeschrijving voor de inlandsche scholen* (Batavia: Landsdrukkerij), containing a section on *kijker*, the Dutch word for telescope, see Mrázek, *Engineers of happy land*, 97–98.

26 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Tawdih al-adilla*, 20, 26 *passim*.

27 Sayyid ʿUthman, *al-Ajwiba*, 25.

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(d. 1270), Ibn Hajar, al-Ghazali, and al-Bajuri (d. 1860).[28] Basically, Sayyid ʿUthman holds the opinion that there is no legally valid reason to have more than just one Friday mosque within the same territory. In addition, he states that it is not sufficient to perform the Friday prayer alone; that in order to fulfil one's religious duty, after the Friday prayer the midday prayer (*salat al-zuhr*) should also be performed (p. 7).

### *The Distribution of the Income of the Luar Batang Shrine*[29]

Another controversy that embroiled Sayyid ʿUthman was related to the income of a holy shrine in a part of Batavia called Luar Batang, located in the northern part of the city. This shrine, which remains very popular today, was built around the tomb of an Arab of Hadrami descent, Habib Husayn ibn Abi Bakr ibn ʿAbd Allah al-ʿAydarus (d. 1756), who, after his death, came to be regarded as a saint and a well-liked object of pilgrimage, not only among the indigenous population but also with Chinese and Indo-Europeans. These pilgrims made many donations to the shrine, not only in the form of money, such as payments to have the Qur'an recited in the sanctuary (*uang mengaji*) or giving money to buy frankincense, but also gifts in kind were offered, including lamp oil, candles, buffaloes, goats and food. An issue arose about who was entitled to these gifts – the descendants of Habib Husayn or the state appointed authorities who administered the district where the shrine was located?

The issue surfaced on 4 July 1870, when the native district head of Penjaringan in the north of Batavia came to see Sayyid ʿUthman in order to obtain a *fatwa* from him that would make him the beneficiary of the income of the shrine, as administrator of the territory where the shrine was located. Interestingly, he had brought along a written *fatwa* given by the *penghulu Arab*,[30] Habib Taha ibn ʿAlwi al-Saqqaf, in which he stated that Sayyid Husayn ibn Ahmad, as a descendant of the saint, was entitled to the profits of the sanctuary. Consequently, Sayyid ʿUthman produced a *fatwa* on the issue stating that the closest descendants of the saint were entitled to the profits of the shrine, thus confirming the *fatwa* of the *penghulu Arab* and denying the claims of the district head.

The issue appears to have calmed down for a while, but it flared up again around 1876, when the judge of the Native Court (*penghulu landraad*), Haji

28 See Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 373–375.

29 I have dealt with this issue in more detail in Kaptein, 'Conflicts.'

30 This official was appointed for the administration of the religious affairs of the Arabs in cities with a substantial Arab community, e.g. in Batavia. This official was distinct from the ordinary *penghulu landraad* who acted as an Islamic judge in an indigenous court.

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Muhammad Salih, gave a judgement in the Islamic Court (*raad agama*) that the income of the sanctuary of Luar Batang was no longer intended for the descendants (*aqrab*) of the saint, and instead must be transferred to the district head. The relatives of the saint contested this pronouncement and contacted Sayyid ʿUthman. Consequently, he wrote an Arabic treatise on the issue, entitled *Simt al-shudhur wa-l-jawahir fi hall takhsis al-nudhur li-l-sada al-atahir*, 'The necklace of the golden beads and gems dealing with the solution of the [issue about the] designation of the votive offerings to the pure *sayyids*.'[31] As the title indicates, this work deals with the concept of *nadhr*, 'votive offering,' made to the *sayyids* and presents a theoretical discussion of this concept. In the treatise, Sayyid ʿUthman reiterates his view that the *sayyids* are the ones who are entitled to these gifts, thus rejecting the decision of the *penghulu landraad*.

Notably, Muhammad Salih had also tried to eliminate Sayyid ʿUthman by filing a complaint against him about the issue with the Dutch authorities; however, following an investigation the complaint was declared unfounded in an official decision of the Resident of Batavia of 16 May 1878.[32] Eventually the efforts of Sayyid ʿUthman appeared to be effective, as the Islamic Court decided that the profits from the holy grave should go to the family of the saint, and not to the local authorities.[33]

The *Simt al-shudhur* also shows us an interesting feature related to the text. After he had finished the manuscript, Sayyid ʿUthman sent it to Mecca to ask for approval from the great Shafiʿi *mufti* Ahmad Dahlan. He received the approval, as evidenced by Dahlan's handwritten approval of the contents the work, confirmed by his personal seal.[34] Subsequently, the *Simt al-shudhur* was also lithographed by Sayyid ʿUthman at the beginning of July 1877, i.e. only once it had received the support of his former teacher.

### *Establishing the Correct* Qibla

Another issue requiring the expertise of Sayyid ʿUthman was determining the correct direction for performing the ritual prayer towards the Kaʿba in Mecca. This direction also determines the architecture of a mosque in which this *qibla*

31 A manuscript copy of this work is kept in Leiden University Library (Cod. Or. 7057a-4). The lower part of the title page of this manuscript contains a note in Arabic – probably written by Sayyid ʿUthman himself – from which I have derived the information on the issue of 1876.

32 Besluit 16 mei 1878, Afd. Secretarie no. 3109, see Leiden University Library, Or. 18.097 S 28.

33 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1592.

34 This *taqriz* is also included in Sayyid ʿUthman, *Fath al-bab*, 14.

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is fixed in the so called *mihrab*, the prayer niche in one of the walls of the mosque. There were situations when it was clear that this direction was incorrect and, from time to time this caused controversies. As mentioned above, Sayyid ʿUthman's grandfather, ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri, had also been active in establishing the correct *qibla* and it was probably he who introduced Sayyid ʿUthman to the topic.

Certainly, the *qibla* issue arose a number of times during the lifetime of Sayyid ʿUthman and the first time his involvement in this is documented is around 1873. This is apparent from a later work on the issue, *Tahrir aqwa al-adilla fi tahsil ʿayn al-qibla*, 'The presentation of the strongest proofs in establishing the precise *qibla*,' from the end of 1902, which he wrote at the request of a number of individuals from Banjarmasin.[35] This is a bilingual work, in which Sayyid ʿUthman explains in the Malay part (p. 2) that 'approximately 30 years ago' he had already devoted attention to the *qibla* issue in an Arabic work, called *Nafa'is al-nakhla fi wasa'il al-qibla*, 'The valuable palms dealing with the ways to establish the *qibla*.' He also says that he had produced a chart with the precise *qibla* for various places in the archipelago. In 1902, a text with the same title was published by Sayyid ʿUthman and this is most probably a re-edition of the older version. In this astronomical work a column is given with the precise location of a range of places in the Netherlands East Indies in degrees and minutes, from Aceh to Ternate. This made it possible to determine the correct *qibla* and, consequently, to build new mosques in the proper direction.[36] Interestingly, various charts related to this issue have been preserved in Leiden University Library.[37]

### *Joint Marital Property*

In 1876 another case in which Sayyid ʿUthman was involved took place, as evidenced by the following *fatwa* that he issued in Arabic: A married couple who had combined their possessions upon their marriage, started to quarrel, whereupon each of them claimed their personal possessions back. Disagreement ensued and the wife offered to give the husband back his share if he granted her a divorce (*talaq*) with a written confirmation that he had no more claims on her. After he had given this statement, she gave the things back, but the husband claimed that his wife had not returned everything she owed him and, for this reason, he refused to divorce her. The question was whether this last claim was valid or not? And whether or not the divorce was valid? And, if so,

35 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 842.

36 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Tahrir aqwa al-adilla*, 3.

37 E.g. Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 1 and no. 2.

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was it then revocable or void? In his answer Sayyid ʿUthman stated that the husband's claim was not acceptable given that he had issued his first confirmation, which constituted valid proof. Thus, the divorce was valid, but the husband had the right to revoke it.[38]

In the scholarly literature the issue at stake in this *fatwa* is called joint marital property. This is the practice in customary law (*adat*), which was and still is adhered to by various different Indonesian ethnic groups; to wit that within marriage there is joint property owned by husband and wife on an equal basis and which is separate from individual property. Definitions differ from one group to another, as well as the opinion on division of this after the termination of the marriage in divorce, or as a result of the death of one of the spouses. Indigenous names for this institution differ, but in Java this joint marital property is called *guna-gini*, while for instance in West Java it is *seguna sekaya*.[39]

Issues related to joint marital property obviously occurred frequently and this accounts for a minor work of a more general nature by Sayyid ʿUthman, which he published at the beginning of 1881 under the title *Mas'alah daʿwa harta antara laki isteri atau antara ahli warith satu sama lain*, 'On the issue of claims to joint property between man and wife or between heirs.' This work is mainly concerned with the proper way to obtain valid evidence for the division of joint marital property and involves all kinds of technical issues, like the quality and the number of the witnesses, and the status of the oath. Interestingly, he also refers to a *fatwa* issued by his teacher, ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, on the *seguna sekaya* question (p. 13). The work does not deal with a specific case, but is of a theoretical nature and deals with this *adat* institution entirely within the framework of *fiqh*.[40]

### *Conditional Repudiation*[41]

Another early issue in which Sayyid ʿUthman was involved as an expert dates from 1880 and deals with a case of conditional repudiation (*taʿliq al-talaq*). In the marriage law of large parts of the Netherlands East Indies at the time, it was customary that, immediately after the conclusion of a marriage contract, the husband stated that his wife would be repudiated, should he not fulfil certain specified duties.

38 Sayyid ʿUthman, '*Fatwa* on joint marital property.'

39 Cammack and Feener, 'Joint marital property.' Djajadiningrat, 'Een verzoek.'

40 Sayyid ʿUthman published the booklet again in 1905.

41 I have dealt with this issue in a previous publication, Kaptein, 'Documentary evidence,' 88–90.

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The case is well documented in a small untitled booklet published by Sayyid ʻUthman, containing both Malay and Arabic texts. On the first page it reads: 'These are the questions and answers pertinent to the issue that it is not permitted to confirm repudiation on the sole basis of a document drawn up by witnesses who have since died.'[42] The controversy started in 1880 when a woman asked a district *imam* (*imam distrik*) to affirm that she was divorced from her husband, who had left her to go on a sea voyage[43] and had subsequently been absent for approximately ten years. Although the *imam* who had married (*menikahkan*) the woman, as well as the witnesses who had been present when the marriage had been concluded, had since died, in the marriage registration book (*buku nikah*)[44] there was a written *taʻliq* formula 'as is usual according to the customary law of the land (*adat negeri*)' with the signature of the husband (*tekannya suami*) under it. A *taʻliq* formula stipulates the conditions that would lead to the dissolution of the marriage. Despite this written evidence, the *imam* to whom the woman had turned did not confirm the repudiation because he was aware of texts issued by *'ulama'* that forbade the giving of a verdict solely on the basis of written evidence without the verbal testimony of the witnesses.

The issue moved a stage further when the *imam* presented the case to Sayyid ʻUthman. The booklet contains the question (in Arabic) posed to the Sayyid, asking him whether or not the wife had been repudiated in this instance. It also includes his extensive answer, which forms the major part of the booklet and which denies the validity of the *talaq* (repudiation) under the given circumstances.

Subsequently, this answer was discussed in a legal advisory council (*majlis fatwa*).[45] The majority of the participants supported Sayyid ʻUthman's view. However, on the basis of the principle of emergency (*darura*), a part of a Qur'anic verse (Qur'an 2: 185b), and a quotation from a Muslim legal manual,[46] three members of the *majlis* were of the opinion that the marriage could be

42 Sayyid ʻUthman, *Segala soal jawab*, 1.

43 According to the *adat*, there was a difference in the exact period of absence by the husband, depending upon whether he had left by land or by sea, see Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjèhers*, Vol. 1, 384.

44 According to Niemeijer, *Batavia*, 213 Islamic marriages were already registered carefully in Batavia in the seventeenth century.

45 There is no indication of the existence of these *fatwa* councils at the end of the nineteenth in the scholarly literature, but, judging from this example, there was a joint deliberation of experts in Islamic law, as is common in contemporary Indonesia.

46 The *Fath al-muʻin* by the sixteenth-century scholar Zayn al-Din al-Malaybari, see Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 375.

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dissolved on the basis of the written document without requiring the presence of the witnesses. Following the majority, after this gathering, the district *imam* gave his decision to the woman, once again telling her he could not confirm her repudiation.

Appealing to a higher level, the case was sent to Mecca, where it was presented to a number of authoritative Muslim scholars for arbitration, all of whom also stated that the repudiation could not be confirmed. Interestingly, the aforementioned Nawawi al-Bantani also played a role in this. 'At the request of a number of persons from Batavia,' he transferred the issue to Ahmad Dahlan, the former teacher of Sayyid 'Uthman, who agreed with the opinion of his former pupil.[47]

I have summarized this case in detail here because it illustrates a very important aspect of Sayyid 'Uthman's functioning and of Indonesian Islam in general; namely, the hierarchical way in which Islam in the archipelago was related to Mecca. We see that from a local level the issue moves up to an ever higher level, eventually ending up in Mecca, the apex of Muslim learning at the time.[48] We also see that within the scholarly hierarchy of Batavia, Sayyid 'Uthman had a high standing, Moreover, we also observe how well connected he was to the greatest scholars in the Holy City.

### *Procedure of the Islamic Courts*

It is difficult to classify Sayyid 'Uthman's manual for the Muslim Court. It does not appear to originate from a particular controversy, although apparently all kinds of things went wrong at the courts. Because the work is clearly meant as a practical manual I have chosen to deal with it here, and not under the section on his more scholarly writings. In May 1881, he published this manual in Malay under the Arabic title *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya li-ahl al-majalis al-hukmiyya bi-tahqiq al-masa'il li-yatamayyaza la-hum al-haqq min al-batil*, 'The book of Islamic legal rules for the staff of the Islamic Courts for the execution of legal issues, so that the truth will be distinguished for them from the untruth.' The title of this book is very similar to that of another work by Sayyid 'Uthman, which appeared in 1894 under the title *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya li-ahl al-majalis al-hukmiyya wa-l-ifta'iyya* 'The book of Islamic legal rules for the staff of the judicial and advisory councils.'[49] As the titles of both works reveal, they

47 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Segala soal jawab*, 1–11.

48 In 1997, I published a book containing *fatwas* which form a fine illustration of this hierarchical relationship between Mecca and the Dutch East Indies at the end of the nineteenth century, see Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâ'is*.

49 I will deal with this other book in Chapter Five.

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each deal with the duties and procedures within the judiciary, but they are not identical; the first work does not go into concrete cases, while the second one does.

Sayyid ʿUthman wrote this 1881 guide at the request of two officials from the Islamic Court (*raad agama*). The functions of these officials are described as the *huf jaksa pena*, the Chief Prosecutor with the Pen and the *kommandan musannif*, the Writing Commander, and it is clear that these officials were responsible for the bureaucratic procedures within the court, like the writing down of the verdicts. They made a request to Sayyid ʿUthman after a number of disagreements in the *raad agama* about the proper citations from the authoritative works of the *ʿulama'* that were used in the courts. In the introduction to the work, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote that he had complied with this request because he felt a responsibility to assist in improving the rules of the state in the judiciary, and also that he was able to understand the difficult Arabic language of the texts and translate them into Malay. Moreover, he felt bound by the statement of Ibn Hajar who thought that a person with religious knowledge was obliged to spread this among ignorant people. In order to underline his authority, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned a number of issues, in which he had received the full approval of the great Ahmad Dahlan. The first matter related to the pulling down of a prayer house (*langgar*) in Pekojan. A native district head (*kommandan*), named Ayyub, had asked Sayyid ʿUthman whether it was allowed to demolish this structure, as had been stated in a *fatwa* issued by someone else, on the grounds that it was not a religious endowment (*waqf*). Sayyid ʿUthman held the contrary opinion that this prayer house was indeed a *waqf* and, moreover, built on land owned by the Dutch administration (*kompeni Holanda*) and, therefore, could not be pulled down. Moreover, Ahmad Dahlan had given his approval to Sayyid ʿUthman's book *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya*,[50] as well as his *Simt al-shudhur*, dealt with above. Finally, Dahlan had also granted approval to Sayyid ʿUthman's views on a number of theological issues.[51]

Having justified his competence to write the book, in Chapter One Sayyid ʿUthman starts the actual work by going into the legal sources for making a judgement or a *fatwa*. As far as these sources are concerned, the judgements and *fatwas* should be based on the *Tuhfa* by the renowned sixteenth-century Shafiʿi scholar Ibn Hajar and the *Nihaya* by another famous sixteenth-century Shafiʿi scholar al-Ramli.[52] These sources constitute the apex of the Shafiʿi legal school of thought and comprise the opinions of the most prestigious

50 This book will be dealt with below, p. 92.

51 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya*, 1–10.

52 Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 31, 375.

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predecessors of the Shafi'ite tradition. An interesting point is that it is not sufficient for religious officials to gain religious knowledge by just studying books, but that the guidance of a qualified teacher is also necessary. In this context, Sayyid ʿUthman quotes from a *fatwa* of his teacher ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, who stated that,

> many people in this period of time, in particular the people in Southeast Asia (*ahl Jawah*), understand the explanations of the *ʿulama'* wrongly, because they did not study under qualified teachers and got the wrong knowledge from them, and therefore the infamies are widespread as a result of their words and their audacity to issue *fatwas*.

The chapter ends with a chart (*peta*) that summarizes the sources for reaching a verdict in a hierarchic order, from the Qur'an to later *fiqh* works.[53] Chapter Two deals with the qualifications that the judge (*qadi*) and the *mufti* should have, and their tasks. The main difference between the two is that the *qadi* has the power to enforce particular decisions, while the *mufti* can only express certain opinions (*menzahirkan saja*). Among the requirements for a judge is that he should be appointed by a ruler. This ruler can be an Islamic ruler, but if no such person exists, then his replacement, or the religious and administrative establishment in a territory (*ahl al-hall wa-l-ʿaqd*) can also perform this task. Another issue is that judgements should be reached on the basis of valid legal evidence, derived from the established legal manuals or from valid testimonies. Written evidence by itself is not considered valid, but reliable witnesses must confirm that its content is not forged.[54] The third chapter deals with the functioning of the courts, mainly taken from the *Tuhfa*. The first section deals with the correct procedures of the court session; the second with the proper functioning of the judge, which means, for instance, that he should not accept bribes; while the final section deals with the witnesses, who should be Muslim, free, and legally capable (*mukallaf*). Interestingly, here again the issue of written evidence is taken up. It is repeated that, by itself, it cannot be valid evidence, and it is recommended that two copies of a judgement be made, one for the claimant and one to be stored in the office of the Islamic Court (*kantor raad agama*), in order to function as a mnemonic aid.[55]

53 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya*, 10–28, quote 25.

54 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya*, 29–45; Kaptein, 'Documentary evidence,' 90–94.

55 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya*, 46–58.

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This procedural guide does not go beyond the classical works dealing with the topic, but it is interesting for a number of reasons. Firstly, it confirms the opinion expressed in the *Qamar al-zaman* that Sayyid ʿUthman felt obliged by scholarship and religion to teach the ignorant Indonesians the proper understanding of Islam. Secondly, the book was written before the year 1882, when the Dutch incorporated the Islamic Courts, which they called '*Priesterraden*,' or '*penghulu gerechten*,' into state bureaucracy. Thus, the book demonstrates non-state sponsored efforts to unify the Muslim judiciary. And finally, two issues deserve our particular attention; namely, the issue on legal evidence and the appointment of the judges, because Sayyid ʿUthman wrote this book in a specific colonial context with an ever encroaching bureaucracy. I will return to these points in the conclusion to this book.

In addition to these documented controversies, we might expect that Sayyid ʿUthman was involved in other issues,[56] but the ones dealt with in this section give a good impression of his activities in this domain.

## 5 Writer and Publisher in Batavia

In addition to his writings relating to specific events, Sayyid ʿUthman also wrote and published a variety of other works of a more general and reflective nature, with a less direct link to a specific historical circumstance. These works are often of a very conventional nature; nevertheless, I will render them briefly, because they shed light on Sayyid ʿUthman as a scholar and show the nature and the level of his learning. Moreover, these works sometimes provide insight into the specific Netherlands East Indies' context, and give information on Sayyid ʿUthman's view on the state and in specific local manifestations of religion. I will deal with these works in a loose chronological order, following their date of publication.

### *Introduction to Theology*

What is apparently one of the oldest publications of Sayyid ʿUthman is his undated introduction to theology. It dates from the period before 1886, because Van den Berg mentioned it in his list of publications.[57] Already during Sayyid ʿUthman's lifetime it was printed repeatedly and a Javanese translation from

56 For instance, from a snippet of paper in Leiden University Library, it appears that Sayyid ʿUthman issued a *fatwa* in 1878 on Chinese slaves in Singapore, see 'Various from Mecca.' Cf. Clarence-Smith, *Slavery*, 142; Snouck Hurgronje, 'Sklavenhandel,' 276.

57 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 165.

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1892 is also known. Today the booklet is available throughout Indonesia in modern reprints, and I have made use of such a reprint here. The treatise is in Malay and is called *Kitab sifat dua puluh*, 'The book of the twenty attributes [of God].' In this brief booklet Sayyid 'Uthman examines the elementary theological issues that every Muslim should know. He starts by explaining a number of technical terms, like necessary (*wajib*), 'something that, according to reason, must necessarily exist,' (*barang yang ta dapat pada 'aql tiadanya*), and the impossible (*mustahil*), 'something that, according to reason, cannot exist,' (*barang yang ta dapat pada 'aql adanya*). Then, he lists and explains the twenty attributes (*sifat*) of God, which he divides into four categories. The first category contains one essential attribute (*sifat nafsiyya*); that is, existence (*wujud*), followed by the second category consisting of the negative attributes (*sifat salbiyya*): eternity (*qidam*), permanence (*baqa'*), dissimilarity to the created (*mukhalafat li-l-hawadith*), self-subsistence (*qiyamuhu ta'ala bi-nafsihi*), and oneness (*wahdaniyya*). Sayyid 'Uthman explains that these attributes are described as such because 'they deny anything that is not suited to our Lord.' The third category is that of the *sifat ma'ani*, which are attributes that add a 'concept' to the Essence: power (*qudra*), will (*irada*), knowledge (*'ilm*), life (*hayatun*), hearing (*sam'*), sight (*basar*) and speech (*kalam*). And the fourth category are the attributes of qualification (*sifat ma'nawiyya*), which correspond to the previous category, e.g. powerful (*qadir*), and willing (*murid*). All these concepts are explained using the technical terms clarified at the beginning of his booklet (pp. 5–11). In addition to these explanations about God, Sayyid 'Uthman also includes information on the necessary qualities of the Prophets (p. 11), an overview of the six pillars of the faith (*rukun iman*) (p. 12) and some elementary knowledge on the life of the Prophet Muhammad (p. 13). An explanation of the declaration of faith (*shahada*) concludes the booklet (14–16). At the end, he mentions that he did not want to go into too much detail because this might confuse the ordinary believer and perhaps even lead to unbelief (p. 16). The booklet provides clear insight into these difficult issues and also makes use of diagrams and tables (*jadwal*) for further clarification. Indeed, it is to this clarity that the booklet owes its popularity, even today, and it is, perhaps, Sayyid 'Uthman's best known work.[58]

### *Works for Pilgrims to Mecca*

The oldest dated work by Sayyid 'Uthman is a manual for pilgrims to Mecca written in Malay. It appeared for the first time in 1875 and bears the title *Kitab*

58 Later, his son Hasan also published a version of the work in rhyme, *Syair kitab sifat dua puluh*, no date.

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*manasik haji dan ʿumrah*, 'Guide for the rituals of the greater and minor pilgrimage.' The booklet gives a description of all obligatory and recommended rituals during the Greater and Smaller Pilgrimage.[59] It is not very original since this type of work was and still is available throughout the entire Muslim world. The interesting thing about this booklet is that it provides specific information for pilgrims who travel (*belayar*, literally sail) from the land of the Jawa to Mecca about the direction towards which the ritual prayer should be performed during the journey. The pertinent section mentions what this direction is when one is in Singapore, in Aceh, in Ceylon, in Aden, in Mocha and in Jizan (in the southwest of present-day Saudi Arabia), respectively, until one reaches Jeddah. In order to assist the user of the booklet, a compass-card (*ros kompas*) with the names of the points in Arabic and Malay is provided (p. 8). Another specific feature of the book is its mention of the place where it is obligatory to assume the ritual dress for the pilgrimage (*ihram*). The pilgrims coming from Yemen via the coastal route, like those 'from Jawa,' should do this in a place called Yalamlam.[60] This is also explained in a kind of a circular chart (p. 11). The guide also includes the many Arabic formulas and prayers for the pilgrimage, plus their Malay rendering, which the pilgrim should utter at various stages of the pilgrimage.[61]

Another work related to the pilgrimage to Mecca was published in 1880 under the Arabic title *Kitab islah al-hal fi talab al-halal*, 'The improvement of the situation in striving for the permitted [income].' This work is in Malay and the copy from the Leiden University Library, which I have consulted, holds a handwritten note from Sayyid ʿUthman. In the note, he explains that he wrote the booklet to refute the common idea among returning pilgrims in the Netherlands East Indies that they did no longer had to work for their living, but as 'men of religion' could subsist on the obligatory and voluntary alms of their countrymen (*zakat* and s*adaqa*). 'However', the note continues, 'after I had written this book for them in the Malay language, they started to strive for a permitted income anew from trade, agriculture, crafts or service. May God be thanked for that.' This idea is elaborated in the booklet, for instance, by show-

59 The greater pilgrimage (*hajj*) can only be performed on the designated dates in the month of Dhu l-hijja, while the lesser pilgrimage (*ʿumra*) can be performed throughout the year. See for other differences, E.I. (2), x, 864–866, s.v. *ʿumra.*

60 This is a mountain some 50 kilometres south of Mecca, see E.I. (2), iii, 1052 s.v. *ihram*.

61 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Kitab manasik*, 20–26. The work has remained in print until today and numerous different editions are extant, not only printed in Batavia by Sayyid ʿUthman himself (e.g. 1892, 1893), but also in Mecca and in Singapore. Here I have quoted from the 1947 edition.

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ing that the Prophet considered it to be a sin if a person who is able to work, makes himself dependent upon the gifts of others.[62]

Another work to assist pilgrims to the Holy Land appeared in 1885 and is a 'small dictionary,' *Qamus kecil.* The work is a small vocabulary containing no more than twelve pages of words. Following the introductory remark on the title page, the Malay word in the Jawi script is given first, followed by an Arabic rendering, mostly in a one to one translation. The Arabic words are fully vocalized, which underlines that it was meant for non-Arabic users. The words have been structured thematically under different headings, like names of numbers; names of people; names of land animals; body parts; names of parts of the house, e.g. window, kitchen; names of household utensils; food and drinks; and items of dress. In addition to these simple words, the remaining sections of the list give a number of brief phrases under the following headings: interrogative phrases, e.g. who are you?, what do you want?; announcements, e.g. I want to come, I want to sleep; orders, e.g. sit down, stand up, be quiet; prohibitions, e.g. do not forget, do not listen; 'mixed phrases' (*cerita campur*), e.g. good afternoon, do you want to see me?; courtesy phrases, like how are you?; and finally, courteous wishes (*du'a kehormatan*), e.g. have a nice day, and on the occasion of the birth of a baby: 'may the baby be blessed'.

The booklet is interesting from a linguistic point of view, but here it suffices to point out what its purpose was.[63] I think the simplicity of the work, underlined by the absence of any grammatical introduction, shows that the work was not intended for students of religion, but for pilgrims.[64]

### *Edifying Works*

As might be expected, Sayyid 'Uthman also wrote a lot of edifying works to guide the community of believers. One well-known work appeared in 1880 in Arabic and bears the title *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya min riyad al-sharifa al-Muhammadiyya fi l-nasiha al-murdiyya*, 'The pink apple originating from the noble Muhammadan gardens containing the pleasant admonition.' In the introduction, Sayyid 'Uthman explains that he wrote the book because many people in his surroundings committed sins and trespassed God's prohibitions and, through the book, he aims to instruct these people about their misdemeanours and show them the right path. Thus, the book is an example of an

62 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Kitab islah al-hal*, note in inside cover (Leiden University Library 895 E 16). For the explanation of the occurrence of this and similar notes, see Chapter Four. In 1897, a Sundanese translation by a certain Raden Haji Azhari Bandung was published.

63 I have dealt with this work in more detail in Kaptein, 'Arabic-Malay lexicography,' 122–125.

64 See also Laffan, 'New charts,' 369–370.

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edifying work that, in line with the well-known Islamic phrase, aims to 'order doing good and forbid what is wrong' (*al-amr bi-l-maʿruf wa-l-nahy ʿan al-munkar*).

At the beginning of the book he mentions 26 sources on which he has based himself. Among these figure great scholars like al-Ghazali, Ibn Hajar, al-Qushayri (986–1072)[65], and a number of his teachers, like Ahmad Dahlan, ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir, as well as a number of Hadrami scholars, including al-Habib ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAlwi al-Haddad (1634–1720)[66] and the nineteenth-century scholar Salim ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Sumayr. At the beginning of the book, the approval (*taqriz*) by Ahmad Dahlan, written by his pupil Muhammad Babasil, is also mentioned.

The book starts with a large number of general admonitions to stay away from sins and to accept advice, and is very conventional, but at times it becomes more specific. Noteworthy are chapters eight and nine (pp. 17–24), which mention that the *sayyids* have an obligation to be grateful for their noble lineage; that they should be pious and study as much as they can, while, on the other hand, the *sayyids* have the right to be loved and respected by the people. Of particular interest is chapter eleven (pp. 26–27), which forbids taking the property of Europeans (*al-ifranj*), Chinese and others by theft, or deceit by declaring them bankrupt or forging copies of documents. The reason for this is that:

> Although Europeans have intruded these lands, as a result of the safety that they bring to Muslims, they are similar to people who have a covenant (*muʿahidin*), because the *ʿulama'* say: it is forbidden to take the property of someone who enters the territory of war in peace or who enters our territory under our protection, except by means of a valid sales contract or something similar.[67]

Other prohibitions deal with, amongst other things, interest (*riba*), gambling (using the Dutch word *loterij*, lottery), drinking of wine, listening to music, watching unknown women, and the imitation of unbelievers in outward

65 See on him E.I. (2), v, 526–527. Sayyid ʿUthman used his compendium of mystical concepts and terminology, the *Risala*.

66 See E.I. (3), art. by I.A. Alatas.

67 Later, Sayyid ʿUthman was severely attacked for this opinion and his positive attitude towards the Dutch, see Chapter Five. Also, his teacher Ahmad Dahlan held the opinion that in case the relationship between the infidel colonizer and the colonized was subject to a covenant (*sulh*), it was not permitted to take the property of the unbelievers without legal grounds, see Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâ'is*, 87, 196.

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appearance and dress. Also, the prohibition on men shaving or cutting their beards is mentioned.[68]

### *A Devotional Text*

Another major edifying work was published in 1881. On the title page it reads *Ini Kitab menyatakan perihal Junjungan kita Sayyidina wa-Mawlana Muhammad – salla Allahu ʿalayhi wa-sallam*, 'This is the book dealing with the events [in the life of] our Leader, our Lord and Master Muhammad – may God bless him and grant him peace'. The book bears the Arabic title *al-Zahr al-basim fi atwar Abi l-Qasim*, 'The perfumed flower dealing with the activities of Abu l-Qasim' (sc. the Prophet) and contains an edifying story of the Prophet's life in Malay. It starts with the miraculous events preceding the birth of the Prophet (*mawlid*), his career until he received the first revelation and it ends with his journey to Heaven (*miʿraj*).

All in all, this is a very conventional work and in the framework of the present book the most interesting part is the introduction, which provides some rules for the proper way to read the story of the birth and the journey to Heaven and gives insight into particular ritual practices. Firstly, during its reading one should pay respect to the Prophet, in particular when the parts on the *mawlid* and the *miʿraj* are read. Preferably, the text should be read in a public place, like a mosque, which should not hold furniture that is placed higher than the location from where the text is being read, nor should the room contain pictures of people or animals, 'because this is hated by our Lord (sc. the Prophet) and the angels.' Moreover, one should not read the text sitting on a chair, because this is non-Islamic, men and women should not mingle, and one should not shout in a playful manner the name of God or of the Prophet during the reading.[69] The room must be free from unpleasant odors, like smoke or cigars, because the angels hate this; on the contrary, there is a need to ensure good smells, like frankincense or flowers. All those present are requested to participate in the reciting of the benedictions (*salawat*) and, at the moment that it is recited that the Prophet is born, it is recommended that everybody stands up out of respect for the Prophet.[70] If one obeys all these rules during

68 Sayyid ʿUthman, *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya, passim*.

69 This was forbidden according to two *fatwas* issued by Ahmad Dahlan at the request of Indonesian Muslims, see Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâʾis*, 51–53, 65.

70 Under the influence of reformist ideas, at the beginning of the twentieth century a fierce debate arose in connection with the question of whether or not it was permitted to stand up for the Prophet Muhammad who was believed to be present spiritually during these ceremonies, see Kaptein, 'The *berdiri mawlid* issue.'

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the ritual, then one can expect great rewards from God and intercession (*shafa'a*) of the Prophet during the Last Judgement.

According to Sayyid 'Uthman, he wrote his book in Malay because the famous Arabic *mawlid* texts, like the one by al-Barzanji (1690–1764) and the *Sharaf al-anam* are difficult to understand.[71] He based his work on these two texts with some additions from other works. The book can be read at any time, but reading it on 12 Rabi' al-awwal, the birth date of the Prophet, or 27 Rajab, the date of the Heavenly Journey, is particularly meritorious. Finally, Sayyid 'Uthman instructs the people who attend the reading of the text that after every chapter they should recite, jointly, Arabic benedictions for the Prophet, his Family and his Companions.[72]

The reason why Sayyid 'Uthman gave these guidelines for proper ritual behaviour undoubtedly had to do with popular practices surrounding the reading sessions. As we have seen above, in the *Qamar al-zaman* there is also a description given of a *mawlid* recital in the Third Tribulation, dated 1878 (stanza 109–123), in which Sayyid 'Uthman exposes a charlatan who pretended to become ecstatic during the ritual. From this description, we can gather that the ritual in real terms included a large component of entertainment, and we may assume that this was – as it often still is – a common practice. Interestingly, this text forms a good illustration of the type of religiosity that was propagated by Sayyid 'Uthman, as was described in the previous chapter. We see that piety towards the Prophet is vital within this religiosity and that the Prophet as well as the angels are believed to be present during the ritual; at the same time, it is stressed that this piety should not degenerate into all kinds of popular practices. Moreover, we see that the concept of *shafa'a*, which was an abhorrence in Wahhabi thought, is emphasised.[73]

### *Atlas of Hadramaut*

In the year 1883, Sayyid 'Uthman published a lithographed atlas of Hadramaut, the land of his ancestors.[74] This demonstrates the nostalgic attachment

71 See on these texts Kaptein, 'The *berdiri mawlid* issue,' 125–128.

72 Sayyid 'Uthman, *al-Zahr al-basim*, 2–4.

73 *al-Zahr al-basim* was also recited in the late colonial period, see Pijper, *Fragmenta Islamica*, 128–130, and in the 1950-s and 1960-s by Sayyid 'Ali al-Habshi in Kwitang, see Grijns, 'À la recherche du 'Melayu Betawi',' 142. The text is still for sale in Jakarta.

74 I have consulted a dated copy in the National Library in Jakarta (sign. 1090*). Later, undated copies also exist. I have also seen two other copies of this atlas (KITLV and Leiden University Library), both of which date from 1891 and are apparently reprints or revised editions of this early edition. On the cover it is mentioned that they were available from the well-known Dutch publisher Albrecht & Co. in Batavia.

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members of the diaspora felt to their homeland as not only did Sayyid ʿUthman come up with the idea of compiling an atlas, but apparently there was also a market for it among Arab communities in the Netherlands East Indies.

The atlas consists of four large maps, which are beautifully coloured by hand, in pink, green and yellow in addition to the black ink used for the lithographic print. The actual maps are preceded by a drawing of the universe in concentric circles with the earth located at the centre. The first chart is an accurate map of the world, showing on the first half the two Americas and on the second half the rest of the world. The second map depicts the Arabian Peninsula,[75] with special attention given to Hadramaut, which is located at 47–53 degrees longitude and 15–19 degrees latitude. Chart number three is a map of Hadramaut with a number of colours and symbols indicating for instance mountains, vegetation, roads, and water. Map number four shows the lay-out of a typical Hadrami settlement, with its characteristic architecture, like mosques, the multistorey houses, shrines, as well as agricultural land. The drawings of the architecture are very similar to the cover of the *Qamar al-zaman*, which was clearly inspired by this atlas.

The work is extremely beautiful and colourful and is a testimony to the high skills of the artist (Sayyid ʿUthman himself?) or artists who manufactured this work. Remarkably, the atlas also became known in circles of Western academics, as will be made clear in Chapter Four. The topographical data on Hadramaut were quite accurate for its time; indeed, in 1932, the geographer H. von Wissmann consulted it to draw his own map.[76]

### *Genealogy of the* Sayyids

As we have seen in Chapter Two, Sayyid ʿUthman produced works dealing with the issue of the purity of the lineage of the *sayyids* and, as an example, I mentioned the genealogical tree of these descendants of the Prophet, the *al-Silsila al-Nabawiyya* from 1884. And in 1886 he deals again with genealogy in another work, entitled *Risalah ada di dalamnya hadith Keluarga*, 'Treatise containing Prophetic traditions on the Family.' This small Malay writing deals with the respect that Muslims should have for the descendants of the Prophet. The booklet is based on the work of a number of great scholars of Islam, like al-Suyuti (d. 1505) and Ibn Hajar and a number of Sayyid ʿUthman's own teachers, like Ahmad Dahlan and ʿAbdallah ibn ʿUmar. It explains that the veneration for the *sayyids* is prescribed on the basis of the Qur'anic verse *qul la as'alukum ʿalayhi ajran illa al-mawadda fi l-qurba*, 'Say: I do not ask from you a

75 On this map, also the Suez Canal (*al-turʿa*), which had been opened some 14 years earlier in 1869, is depicted.

76 Van der Meulen and Von Wissmann, *Hadramout*, 96.

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recompense for this, apart from love for the relatives' (Qur'an 42: 23) and as well as on the basis of many Prophetic traditions. This custom is confirmed throughout Islamic history, because many of the great *imams* venerated the Family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*). People who do so will enjoy the Prophet's intercession on the Last Day, while people who do not do this commit sins.[77]

As we have seen, this noble lineage played an important role in the 'Alawi ideology. The 'Alawi genealogy was prominent in the thought of Sayyid 'Uthman and, for this reason, he will have been interested in producing this text. Attention to this topic became even more serious from the beginning of the twentieth century, when the privileged position of the *sayyids* came under pressure as a result of more egalitarian ideas, as we will see in Chapter Six.

### *Inheritance Law*

Another major work deals with inheritance. It is in Malay and bears the Arabic title *Kitab 'ilm al-fara'id*, 'Book on inheritance law.' It was published in 1884. The work deals with the way to distribute inheritances among the different categories of heirs, according to the principles laid down in the Qur'an. Moreover, it offers calculation methods to determine the various shares. According to the introduction, the book is based on reliable (*mu'tamad*) Arabic sources on inheritance law, which have been transferred (*dipindahkan*) into Malay (p. 1). The work is of a theoretical nature, as is evident, for instance, in its treatment of the positions of slaves and manumitted slaves, which had no relevance to the situation in the Netherlands East Indies at the time of writing. Moreover, the book seems devoid of any local colour, apart from the fact that in some examples of calculation the *rupiah* is used as the currency. The book contains a lot of tables, e.g. of the translation of the Arabic names of types of heirs with their Malay rendering (pp. 5–7); grades of family relationship (p. 15); and tables showing the portion of the inheritance for each single heir (pp. 30, 34–5). Although this is not mentioned in the introduction, it seems likely that Sayyid 'Uthman produced the book because he was often consulted on inheritance cases.

### *A Manual for Good Manners*

In August 1885,[78] another work of a more general nature appeared, entitled *Adab al-insan*, 'Proper behaviour for mankind.' This small booklet consists of

77 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Hadith Keluarga*, 1–18. There are at least two later editions of this booklet, one from 1896 and the other from 1916.

78 The final page of the booklet gives this date only according to the Western calendar and reads *tercetak di Betawi pada akhir bulan Agustus tahun 1885*. The booklet was reprinted many times, e.g. in 1908 and is still available in present-day Indonesia.

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27 short paragraphs and has been reprinted numerous times, up until today. In the introduction Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that he wrote this work out of concern that many of his contemporaries were ignorant of the proper way to behave. This was due to the absence of education as a result of lack of money or schooling opportunities. For this reason, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote this booklet and made it available cheaply and in a handy form, so that one could carry it around and, for instance, could consult it during breaks at work. Moreover, he wrote it in 'low Malay' (*melayu rendah*) so that anyone could understand it. The basic idea is that one should respect the rules of religion and those of the customs of the land (*adat negeri*). The booklet is evidently written by a Muslim to assist Muslims in their daily lives and can be characterized as a manual for ethics and etiquette. It is not very technical and the opinions advocated are not supported by quotes from classical *fiqh* books, although occasionally Sayyid ʿUthman refers to one of his own writings for more detailed explanations. Interestingly, it is mentioned that it is not only meant to be read, but also to be heard. This means that it was intended to be read aloud to illiterate individuals.

The issues dealt with include the proper relationship of men towards God; of a child towards his parents; of young persons versus old persons; a pupil versus his teacher; the proper way to behave when visiting the sick; when attending the Friday prayer; when attending a funeral; the proper way to establish the beginning of Ramadan; to conduct a marriage; and rights that husband and wife have within the marriage.[79]

In the framework of the present book some paragraphs are particularly interesting and I will deal with those here in more detail. The third paragraph deals with the way a person should behave towards a person of a higher standing. In this section, it is stated that a person who lives 'under the protection of the government' (*di bawah teduh keadilan*) should esteem this government. In his own words:

> All of us should be very grateful and pay our complete respect to the government (*keadilan*), which takes care of us all so compassionately, as a result of which we enjoy complete well-being in our lives and [we should be grateful] that it takes care of our families and allows our religion to function without anyone daring to harm us, our religion or our property. All this results from the power of the administration (*pemerintah*) and its exercise of justice (*keadilan*) for the entire people.

79 E.g. the wife may only leave the house with the permission of her husband, paragraph 22. I will refer to paragraphs, because in different editions a different pagination is used.

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Another interesting paragraph (16) deals with the use of the drum (*bedug*) to announce the time of prayer as well as the time of fasting and other special occasions, which was customary in the Netherlands East Indies and parts of mainland Southeast Asia. In this section, Sayyid ʿUthman argues that

> the use of the drum (*bedug*) is not forbidden by religion as an aid to the call to prayer (*adhan*) in order to let people who live far away know the times of prayer, or the breaking or the starting of the fast [in Ramadan].

This opinion is a deviation from the purely Islamic custom, which only recognizes the use of the human voice as an instrument to announce the times of prayer, as was propagated, for instance, by Sayyid ʿUthman's teacher.[80] Although Sayyid ʿUthman does not further specify the precise meaning of his formulation '[beating the drum] ... as an aid to the *adhan*,' he must have meant that the beating should not and could not replace the *adhan*, but merely followed the *adhan*, which was the real call to prayer. In real terms, however, it is evident that the people who were too far away to hear the voice of the announcer of the call to prayer (*muʾadhdhin*), had to rely on the sound of the drum for the correct times of prayer; thus, we see here an interesting example of Sayyid ʿUthman's pragmatism and his desire to find a compromise between local custom and Islamic law.

A final, noteworthy example from the *Adab al-insan* comes from paragraph 26 and deals with etiquette; namely, the proper way to greet someone (*memberi salam kehormatan*). After having mentioned who should greet whom, he continues to say that it is also proper to greet persons from another ethnic group (*bangsa*) in such a way that they are able to understand its meaning. This means that a person from Europe should be greeted by moving the hand from the head downwards, while to greet a Muslim the proper way is to move the hand upwards from below to the head. Another way, practiced by people who have abandoned their custom (*adat*), is to wave their hand along their ears, but this way is very ugly (*jelek*) because it goes against the Islamic custom.

### *Posters*

A quite unique type of publication that Sayyid ʿUthman produced was the tables or charts, in Arabic and Malay, called *jadwal*. These tables have the form of a small poster and were meant to be attached to a wall or door. These tables were meant to present, in a schematic way, issues of interest to the general public. They are basically documents to promote knowledge of religion. These posters are an overlooked aspect in the study of Islam and of print culture in

80 Kaptein, *The Muhimmât al-nafâʾis*, 57–58.

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Southeast Asia because, alongside the books (*kitab*), they formed an important educational tool to convey Islamic knowledge. Moreover, they were an important commercial item and were mentioned in all sales catalogues of the work of Sayyid ʻUthman.[81]

Although these posters are normally undated, it is clear that in the period discussed in this chapter, quite a number of these tables were produced, as these are mentioned in the 1886 book by L.W.C. van den Berg.[82] Others, in rare cases, do carry a date. Several of these charts are preserved in Leiden University Library under shelf number Plano 53 F 1. Namely, *Jadwal al-nikah*, which presents the basic marriage rules (nr. 16); *Jadwal al-ridaʻ*, dated 1879, which deals with foster relationships (nr. 25); *Jadwal al-talaq wa-l-ʻidda*, about divorce and the legally prescribed waiting period (nr. 16); *Jadwal al-tajwid*, which gives the rules for Qur'anic recitation in Malay (nr. 11); and, *Jadwal fi-ma yataʻallaqa bi-ahkam al-tajwid*, 'Table on the rules of Qur'anic recitation,' dated 1879 (nr. 10). A final chart is a table to convert days from the year 1302 to the Christian calendar (1884–1885). Consistent with Sayyid ʻUthman's ideas, on top of the table is mentioned in both Arabic and Malay that this table may not be used to fix the beginning of the new month, and that this may only be done by the actual sighting of the new moon (nr. 62).

***Instructions for the Collective Prayer***

An undated booklet in Malay also originates from the earlier phase of Sayyid ʻUthman's career. Like all of his works it is a lithograph, but in this work the handwriting is rather careful, which is characteristic of his earlier publications. Moreover, the almost artificial use of the language confirms that the work is early. The booklet is entitled *Tujuh faedah*, 'Seven wise lessons,' and does not contain quotations or references to other books and states on the final page (p. 11) that 'it was taken from only reliable books.' The content of the booklet deals with, in great detail, seven issues (*mas'ilah*) related to the performing of the collective prayer on Friday, including the question of when a latecomer can still perform the *salat* as a valid prayer; how to overcome non-synchronicity between the prayer leader and the congregation during the prayer; how the congregation has to line up for prayer; and whether or not a replacement (*istikhlaf*) of a prayer leader (*imam*) can be made during particular parts of the prayer service without jeopardizing the validity of the prayer. The book is high-

81 I have made an initial study of this topic in a separate paper, see Kaptein, 'Some early Islamic posters.'

82 Van den Berg, *Le Hadramout*, 166. A number were mentioned in a letter that Sayyid ʻUthman wrote in January 1887 to C. Snouck Hurgronje. In the next chapter I will go into this letter in depth.

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FIGURE 4 *Chart with schematic overview of foster relationships, left in Malay, right in Arabic*
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ly technical and of a purely ritual nature. If it ever had a link to particular historical circumstances it is no longer possible to identify those.[83]

Another undated brochure in Arabic also deals with the topic of *istikhlaf* and can be seen as another example of an early work, given the absence of a proper title for the publication: it is simply called *Hadhihi mabahith al-istikhlaf*, 'These are investigations into *istikhlaf*.' It, too, is concerned with meticulous details on the issue. One remark makes the entire discussion about the topic more understandable and provides a reason for a replacement: this can be, for instance, ritual impurity if, say, the *imam* has a nosebleed during the service.

## 6 Conclusion

Not long after Sayyid 'Uthman had settled in Batavia in 1862, his fame as a teacher and as an expert in Islamic law started to spread. This is clear from the volume of requests for his advice on all kind of religious controversies. From 1869 onwards, Sayyid 'Uthman's started to disseminate his knowledge and opinions in print, by means of his own lithographic press, and this undoubtedly contributed to his standing, in particular beyond Batavia. As we have seen, all of his activities aimed at spreading his puritan understanding of Islam.

Through his activities, Sayyid 'Uthman became known among various state authorities, not only with indigenous officials, like *penghulus*, but also with European officers, like the judges of the Native Courts. A point of the utmost importance is that we have seen that some of Sayyid 'Uthman's works from this stage in his career reveal a very positive attitude towards the colonial administration.

In sum, we can say that since Sayyid 'Uthman's arrival in Batavia, within the period of some 23 years dealt with in this chapter, he had developed into an authoritative Muslim leader with good contacts with the highest Muslim authorities in Mecca, and into a scholar of high standing with a very successful career. However, at this stage of his career, despite his relatively mature age of 63 years, his ambition had not waned and he was ready to take a new step in his life by joining the service of the colonial administration in 1889. How this eventuated is dealt with in the next chapter.

83 The booklet was also reprinted later; I have a contemporary copy published by the Maktabat al-munawwar from Semarang.

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CHAPTER 4

# Partner of C. Snouck Hurgronje (1889–1906)

## 1 Introduction

In the previous chapter, I dealt with the life of Sayyid ʿUthman in Batavia, before he became officially involved in the Dutch colonial administration. This chapter will start by explaining how the outcome of a prolonged debate on Sayyid ʿUthman, which had started around 1885, led to him becoming involved in the administration in 1889.[1] Next, this chapter will examine his partnership with C. Snouck Hurgronje, who was responsible for Muslim Affairs in the colonial state until he left the Netherlands East Indies in 1906. During this partnership, in 1891, Sayyid ʿUthman was appointed Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs. Alongside his advisory role, Sayyid ʿUthman continued his other activities; namely, spreading his understanding of Islam and exposing wrong practices among the Muslims of the Netherlands East Indies. However, as the focus of the present chapter lies in his involvement in the colonial administration, these other activities will be dealt with in Chapter Seven.

## 2 Early Contacts with the Dutch

Upon his return to Batavia, Sayyid ʿUthman would definitely have noticed particular Dutch activities in the colony. A curious example of this is his observation of a masquerade during a Dutch party around 1864, to which people wore all sorts of dress from all over the world. After having voted for their most favorite attire, all those present apparently agreed that the Arab dress, including the turban, was the most beautiful and the most respectable.[2]

On a personal level, one of his first Dutch acquaintances was a medical doctor by the name of F.W.M. Hoogenstraaten, who had been practicing in Batavia since 1861 and who had been in contact with Sayyid ʿUthman from the early 1860s onwards, as is clear from a letter dated 9 May 1898 that Hoogenstraaten wrote to the well-known Leiden professor of Arabic M.J. de Goeje (1836–1909).[3] In this letter, he writes that he had known 'his friend Sayyid ʿUthman for al-

1 I have also addressed this issue in Kaptein, 'Arabophobia' and 'De adviseur.'

2 See Sayyid ʿUthman, *Taghrid qumri al-hama'im*, 7–8.

3 See Snouck Hurgonje, 'Michaël Jan de Goeje.'

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most 40 years' and praised his orthodoxy and impeccable way of life.[4] In addition, Hoogenstraaten's name appears in two letters written by Sayyid 'Uthman to Snouck Hurgronje from 1908 and 1909: one letter talks of Hoogenstraaten being one of the medical doctors treating Sayyid 'Uthman, while the other letter depicts the two men chatting in Malay about a fatal car accident that had occurred in Batavia.[5] From these existing letters we may gather that Sayyid 'Uthman and Dr. Hoogenstraaten had been life long friends and that – at least towards the end of his life – Sayyid 'Uthman had been a patient of Dr. Hoogenstraaten.[6]

Sayyid 'Uthman would also have been noticed in circles of the colonial administration, given his expertise in Islamic law and his increasing involvement in all kinds of legal disputes in the Islamic Courts. In the previous chapter, we have seen an example of this, when a complaint was filed with the colonial authorities against Sayyid 'Uthman in 1878 relating to the issue of the shrine of Luar Batang. This led to an investigation into him.

One Dutchman who noticed the work of Sayyid 'Uthman is the previously mentioned advisor for Oriental languages to the colonial administration, L.W.C van den Berg. Van den Berg came into contact with Sayyid 'Uthman at the beginning of the 1880s. In a publication from 1882 on the Islamic clergy, he remarked that '[…] also in Batavia nowadays a teacher, with a great reputation among the people, lives in kampong Petamburan.'[7] Although Sayyid 'Uthman is not mentioned here explicitly, it is beyond doubt that it is him Van den Berg is talking about. Two years later, Van den Berg mentioned Sayyid 'Uthman explicitly in an article on the relationship between Islamic law and *adat* law. In the academic debate on the hierarchy of these two law systems Van den Berg saw Sayyid 'Uthman's *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya* (1881) as proof that he was right in his view that Islamic law had priority over *adat*, as he had described in his *Beginselen van het Mohammedaansch recht*. In this article, Van den Berg again mentions Sayyid 'Uthman's great reputation among the native population and the indigenous administrators; he also remarked that 'until now Europeans have given too little attention to his writings.'[8] In Van den Berg's above

4 Hoogenstraten, 'Letters to to de Goeje.'

5 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje,' written on 31 December 1908 and 25 July 1909, respectively. See also Kaptein, 'The lament.'

6 See on him, Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1515 note 1. In 1858, he defended his PhD thesis at Leiden University, entitled *Over de scabies* ('On Scabies'). In 1902, he received a reward of *f* 50.000 from the King of Siam to thank him for curing his son, *Nieuws van de Dag van Nederlandsch Indië*, 4 July 1902.

7 Van den Berg, 'De Mohammedaansche geestelijkheid,' 27.

8 Van den Berg, 'Mohammedaansch recht en adat,' 146; 152. On this debate, see Buskens and Kommers, 'The delayed reception.'

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mentioned publication on the Hadramaut and the Hadrami emigrants in the Netherlands East Indies from 1886, Sayyid ʿUthman is dealt with in detail. Here Van den Berg mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman had supplied him with a sketch of Hadramaut, which Van den Berg had used as one of the sources for the map in the book, and with drawings of houses and the like. Moreover, there is a long section devoted to Sayyid ʿUthman, which mentions that he owned a lithographic press and had recently given up teaching in order to devote himself entirely to writing. At this point, Sayyid ʿUthman already had 38 publications to his name. Moreover, it is noteworthy that Van den Berg praises him for his loyal attitude towards the government.[9]

Although it is evident that Van den Berg knew Sayyid ʿUthman personally, the contacts between the two men do not seem to have been very intensive, or at least not to have been very longstanding. For example, Van den Berg does not explicitly mention Sayyid ʿUthman as one of his linguistic sources on the spoken Arabic of the Netherlands East Indies.[10] Moreover, it appears that Van den Berg did not seek advice from Sayyid ʿUthman on matters of Islamic law when he was preparing his translation of the *Minhaj al-talibin* from al-Nawawi, which he published in 1882. From Van den Berg's letters to M.J. de Goeje, it appears that he had consulted an Arab in Semarang, but not Sayyid ʿUthman.[11] This also suggests that their relationship was not a close one.

The first time Sayyid ʿUthman attracted serious international attention was in connection with the lithographed atlas of Hadramaut, which he had published in 1883. The Batavia-based Dutch lawyer Dr. M.C. Piepers (1835–1919)[12] sent a copy of this monumental work to the editors of the *Revue Coloniale Internationale* for review. It is not known how Piepers had come into possession of this atlas, but it is possible that he purchased it from Sayyid ʿUthman himself. Piepers was active in the Netherlands Indies judiciary from 1864–1894 in various capacities, including as chairperson of several Native Courts (*landraad*) and, from 1879, various functions attached to the High Court. Certainly, in these capacities, he may well have had contact with Sayyid ʿUthman about legal issues. Whatever the case, this atlas entered European circles via Piepers and the atlas was the reason why Sayyid ʿUthman became more widely known among the Dutch. The atlas was reviewed in a brief article in German in the

9 Van den Berg, *Le Hadhramout*, 7–8, 164–167.

10 Van den Berg, *Le Hadhramout*, 231–290.

11 Van den Berg, 'Letters.' It appears from these letters that Van den Berg had also consulted De Goeje on many issues concerning the translation. In a devastating review, Snouck considered this translation a waste of government money. Apparently, De Goeje's involvement had not helped to improve the quality of the translation to such a degree that it could meet the standards of Snouck! See Snouck, 'Beoefening,' 59.

12 On him Orie, 'Piepers.'

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1886 issue of the *Revue Coloniale Internationale* by M.J. de Goeje, who was an expert in, amongst other things, Arab geography. De Goeje was apparently so impressed with the atlas that he wanted Sayyid ʿUthman to assist him in acquiring a number of inscriptions from southern Arabia. He considered Sayyid ʿUthman '[...] a learned man who is able to understand the academic significance of the study of inscriptions [...].'[13]

In addition to the individuals mentioned in this section, Sayyid ʿUthman was also in touch with at least two other Dutchmen I know of; namely, Karel Frederik Holle and his close friend J.A. van der Chijs, as will be clear from the next section.

## 3 Disturbances in West Java

Events in West Java in the second half of the 1880s led to Sayyid ʿUthman becoming even more widely known in Dutch circles. In this part of the archipelago the Naqshabandiyya *tarekat* (Arabic *tariqa*) was active. This mystical brotherhood derived its name from its fourteenth-century Turkmenian founder Baha' al-Din Naqshband and was widespread in Central, South and Southeast Asia. The brotherhood had been active in the Netherlands East Indies since the seventeenth century.[14] In the early 1880s, this brotherhood caused unrest in West Java and Sayyid ʿUthman played a central role in trying to oppose this Sufi order. Regarding himself as a strict and pious Muslim and upholder of orthodoxy, Sayyid ʿUthman resented the activities of this brotherhood and, consequently, he wrote a polemical treatise in Malay with the Arabic title *al-Nasiha al-aniqa li-l-mutalabbisin bi-l-tariqa*, 'Gentle advice to those who wear the gown of the mystical brotherhood.'[15] Sayyid ʿUthman's booklet is basically a rendering of a work by the prestigious Hadrami scholar Ibn Sumayr, written in Singapore in 1852, against an in his view false Sufi *shaykh* by the name of Haji Ismaʿil Mingakabau. In the treatise, Sayyid ʿUthman severely criticises the brotherhood's leaders, accusing them of ignorance of the articles of the faith and rules of Islamic jurisprudence and of indolence in following the way of the Prophet. Such ignorance and indolence, he claimed, prevented one from embarking on the mystic path. In his brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman stated

13 De Goeje, 'Hadramaut,' 117.

14 Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah.*

15 The title is a word play: *mutalabbis* not only means wearing a particular dress item, but also dubious, obscure, and the like. This issue was also described in the *Qamar al-zaman*, stanza 124–131.

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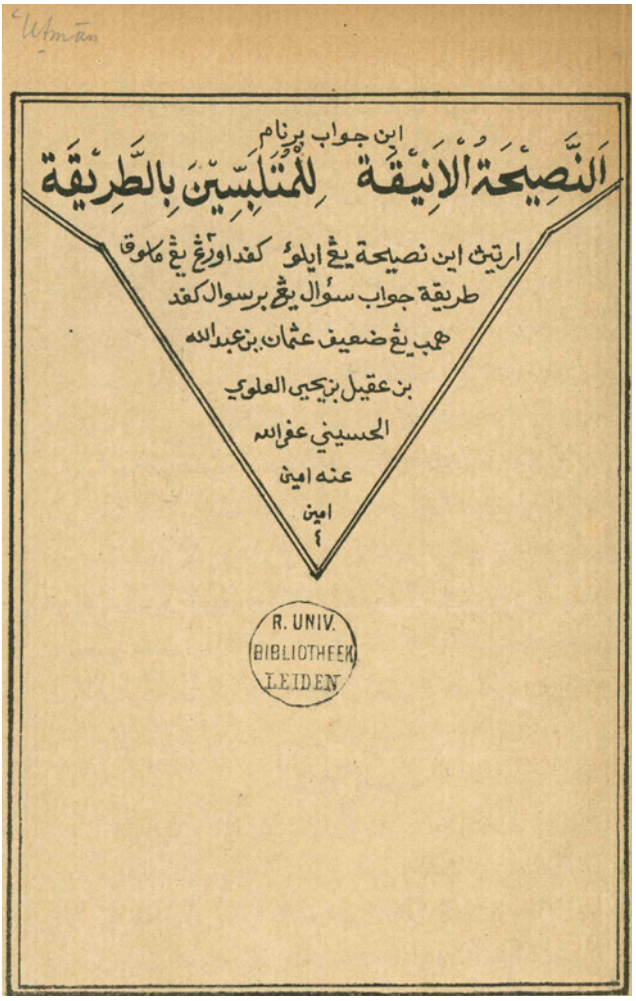


FIGURE 5 *Title page of* al-Nasiha al-aniqa
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that participation in mystical brotherhoods was not forbidden as long as it did not violate the rules of Islamic law, but since he considered that the followers of the *tarekat* in West Java were contravening these rules, he gave them 'gentle advice' to abandon their Sufi garments and stop their pseudo-mystical practices altogether.[16]

16 Sayyid 'Uthman, *al-Nasiha al-aniqa.*

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This work gave rise to a discussion in government circles, as is clear from a number of documents from the National Archive in Jakarta.[17] In a letter of 26 January 1886, the Resident of Bandung reported to the Governor General Otto van Rees (1823–1892) that he got hold of Sayyid ʿUthman's brochure, a thousand copies of which, according to him, had been distributed, and which attacked the followers of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood. The Resident suggested that the spreading of this pamphlet was causing controversy and hatred among Muslims.[18] On 30 January 1886, the Resident of the Preanger also sent a copy of the work to the Governor General. He commented that the work was not interesting in itself, but it was useful in terms of learning about the religious differences within the region. Moreover, he mentioned the individuals who were, apparently, behind the spread of the brochure: these were K.F. Holle (1829–1896), the well-known Honorary Advisor for Native Affairs who lived on his estate Waspada in Garut, and the Chief *penghulu* of Garut, Shaykh ʿUmar.[19] At the time that the Resident wrote this letter, Sayyid ʿUthman was staying with Holle. As an Arab, Sayyid ʿUthman was subject to the pass and quarter system and, for this reason, he had to ask permission from the Resident of Batavia to travel to Waspada; Holle had appended a letter of recommendation to this request in which he had characterized Sayyid ʿUthman as 'an enlightened and much respected man in Batavia.'[20] The same Resident wrote again to the Governor General on 31 March 1886. In this letter, he voiced the opinion that the disturbances were not caused by the followers of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood, but by the people opposing it. According to him, Holle was highlighting the dark sides of the brotherhood too much, was too pessimistic in his judgements, seeing 'imaginary dangers,' and was led by his aversion to certain individuals. In fact, the treatise of Sayyid ʿUthman was not influential among the people and an investigation uncovered only a very few copies of the book.[21]

In order to solve the controversy surrounding Sayyid ʿUthman and his anti-Naqshabandiyya booklet, the Council of the Indies sent a letter on 12 April 1886 inviting the advisor L.W.C. van den Berg to give his expert opinion on the *al-Nasiha al-aniqa*. In his response of 22 April 1886, Van den Berg started to give

17 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta.' I would like to thank Karel Steenbrink for sharing his personal collection of photocopies from the Arsip Nasional with me.

18 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta,' v, no. 14.

19 Van den Berge, *Holle*, 263–268.

20 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta,' v, no. 15. Simultaneously, permission was asked for a certain Sayyid ʿAbd al-Rahman al-ʿAydarus, who apparently accompanied Sayyid ʿUthman.

21 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta,' v, no. 17.

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an outline of the work of Sayyid ʿUthman who claimed that the people who were involved in the brotherhood did not have a proper understanding of it and had bad intentions. According to him, the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood had been condemned by Salim ibn Sumayr in the past and in his own time also by Ahmad Dahlan, the *mufti* of Mecca. Van den Berg added that two written approvals (*tashih*) of Sayyid ʿUthman's condemnation of the brotherhood were also included, one from Nawawi al-Bantani from Mecca and one from Shaykh Junayd from Mecca; the latter had been brought along by a pilgrim who had submitted the work to Junayd at the request of Sayyid ʿUthman. And, Van den Berg continued, he had already reported on Sayyid ʿUthman in a secret report of January 1885 and, for this reason, there was no need to repeat it.[22]

This secret report by Van den Berg is lost, but we can safely assume it communicated the same information about Sayyid ʿUthman as he had already mentioned in his 1886 book on the Hadrami Arabs in the colony: in addition to information about Sayyid ʿUthman's publication activities, Van den Berg characterized Sayyid ʿUthman as the most important authority on Islamic theology and law in the archipelago. Moreover, he mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman continually showed his loyalty towards the Dutch administration, called him a declared adversary of the Pan-Islamist disturbances and the mystical brotherhoods and, finally, he pointed out that Sayyid ʿUthman's anti-*tarekat* stance had led to hostility among the local clergy.[23] In his 1886 report to the Council of the Indies, Van den Berg added the following:

> I wish to add to this that I have known him for years[24] as one of the most respected members of the Arab community in Batavia, and also as a man of great influence in Muslim affairs in the entire archipelago. He has already written various popular works of a religious and moral nature, mainly directed against the flaws in the character of the natives, and against those who use Islam as an excuse for worldly intentions. Submission to the established powers, even if they do not belong to the believers, is also a theme that he often deals with. Some months ago, the Leiden professor De Goeje placed an elaborate announcement about an Arabic

22 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta,' v, no. 16. According to the catalogue, the copy of *al-Nasiha al-aniqa* in the Leiden University Library (895 E 7) contains a copy of Nawawi's comments. Unfortunately, this is missing. Junayd was an old teacher in the Jawa colony in Mecca, who originated from Batavia but at the time already resided in Mecca for 50 years, see Snouck, *Mekka*, 262–264

23 Van den Berg, *Le Hadhramout*, 164–167.

24 It was argued above that they did not know each other very long, at least not very well.

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> atlas that he had published in the *Revue Coloniale Internationale*. He only started his fight against the Naqshabandiyya in the Preangan regencies because he thought he was doing good work. I write this, Your Excellence, because, as I have heard, some followers of this devotional movement have undertaken efforts to make him suspicious with the European administration in the Preangan regencies, and it would be regretful if he experienced troubles as a result of this. He is a person whose influence may possibly be of further service to the government in political matters (*op staatkundig terrein*).

On the basis of this opinion of Van den Berg, on 7 May 1886 the Council of the Indies produced a piece of advice on Sayyid ʻUthman's anti-Naqshabandiyya writing. This advice stated that this work was not harmful, but:

> On the contrary, to its benefit, it should be considered to have a useful and desirable tendency, because it opposes a devotion which, in deviation from the normally prescribed religious forms and customs in the Qur'an, many often think of as dangerous.

Consequently, the Resident of the Preanger who had implied that Sayyid ʻUthman's book had been the source of the unrest, received the message that the government did not see any reason to act against the *al-Nasiha al-aniqa*.[25]

In the archival material summarized above, mention is made of only one anti-Naqshabandiyyah booklet written by Sayyid ʻUthman, the *al-Nasiha al-aniqa*; however, in the course of the conflict with his *tarekat* opponents, Sayyid ʻUthman wrote another anti-Naqshabandiyyah pamphlet, this time in Arabic, entitled *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya fi ʻuluw sha'n tariqat al-Sufiyya*, 'The trustworthy document dealing with the loftiness of the matters of the brotherhood of the mystics.' The pamphlet was published in July 1886 and, according to Sayyid ʻUthman, he wrote it in response to the many questions about the *Al-nasiha al-aniqa*. This *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya* can be characterized as a better documented repetition of his earlier work. In it, he approved of the conscientious Sufi leaders who faithfully followed the requirements of the *tariqa*, as stipulated in the authoritative texts, such as obeying the Shariʻa, displaying piety, modesty, and ascetism. Conversely, he severely condemned those who did not hold on to these principles. Indeed, he mentioned a number of their evil deeds (*mafasid*), for example, claiming to have miraculous powers.[26]

25 'Various notes from the National Archive in Jakarta,' v, no. 19.

26 Sayyid ʻUthman, *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*, 1–6, 13. A few months later, in September, a Malay translation of this brochure followed.

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The documents from the National Archive in Jakarta make clear that Sayyid 'Uthman was not the only one concerned about the *tarekat*; indeed, it also induced anxiety in particular government officials. To fully appreciate the government's position, one must keep in mind that indigenous mass organizations did not yet exist in the 1880s and, in fact, the *tarekat* formed the only social institution capable of mobilizing people at a supra-local level. Although the *tarekat* in the Netherlands East Indies were not politically oriented, they were feared as a possible framework for anti-colonial rebellions – these fears materialized only two years later with the Cilegon rebellion of 1888 and on other occasions in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries.[27] For this reason, the government often regarded *tarekat* adherents as fanatics who posed a threat to law and order. This attitude was exemplified by K.F. Holle who strongly disapproved of the Naqshabandiyya *tarekat*.[28] As we have seen, Holle was in close touch with Sayyid 'Uthman and had been instrumental in disseminating a thousand copies of Sayyid 'Uthman's anti-Naqshabandiyya brochure in West Java. This demonstrates that Holle was fully aware of the possibilities of making use of Sayyid 'Uthman's authority in order to maintain law and order among the Muslim population.

What is important is that, in the discussion about the role of Sayyid 'Uthman in the disturbances in West Java, his name was cleared in an advice issued by the Council of the Indies and, as a result, the foundations for his good reputation at the highest levels of the Dutch administrative circles were laid.[29]

## 4 First Correspondence with C. Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden

It was, however, as a result of his contacts with Snouck Hurgronje that Sayyid 'Uthman's star really began its rise. This initial contact is reflected in three Arabic letters that Sayyid 'Uthman had sent to Snouck Hurgronje before they had ever met and while the latter was still based in Leiden.[30] The oldest letter, which has been preserved, dates from 30 August 1886. At that time, Sayyid 'Uthman was already in his sixties, while Snouck was just 29 years of age. The letter was sent from Batavia to the Netherlands and addressed Snouck

27 Van Bruinessen, 'Origin and development,' 15–16.

28 Van Bruinessen, *Tarekat Naqsyabandiyah*, 23–27.

29 Slightly after this decision of the Council of the Indies, the Luar Batang issue flared up again (see above Chapter Three) and in this connection an official, by the name of J.F. von Czernicky, wrote a letter to the Resident of Batavia warning him against Sayyid 'Uthman, see Von Czernicky, 'Letter to the Resident of Batavia, 22 September 1886.'

30 Snouck had already heard about Sayyid 'Uthman during his stay in Mecca in 1885, see Snouck Hurgronje, 'Een Arabische bondgenoot,' 79.

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Hurgronje[31] on the advice of Holle and Van der Chijs,[32] who had informed him that Snouck Hurgronje had studied the letter of approval (*tashih*) from Nawawi al-Bantani and Junayd Betawi of Mecca for his book *al-Nasiha al-aniqa*. In his letter, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote that he wanted to offer Snouck Hurgronje another book, *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the reason for writing the two books was:

> to make abundantly clear that the *tariqa* spread these days, as well as its propagation by the *shaykhs* (= *tarekat* leaders, N.K.) to the uneducated (*juhhal*), are not correct, or might even result in scandalous deeds in religious and worldly matters.

He asked Snouck Hurgronje to write a letter to the Dutch government in support of his book and to inform officials about its content so that they would become aware of the dangers of the brotherhoods. Moreover, he asked Snouck Hurgronje:

> [...] to mention my name to the leaders of the Dutch state, both in Europe and in Batavia, because many *shaykhs* of the *tariqa* and other jealous persons wish to discredit me until I am ruined. If there had not been Dutch justice (*ʿadl*) in the land of Java and beyond, then it would have been impossible for me to live in Batavia.

The letter ends with the request to send the supporting letter in a European language (*bi-l-Ifranjiyya*) to Van der Chijs.[33]

Apparently inspired by this letter and by Sayyid ʿUthman's anti-Naqshabandiyya books, Snouck Hurgronje published two articles in the Dutch newspaper the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* on 14 and 16 October 1886, respectively. At this point, the two men had not yet met, but in these articles

31 In later letters, after Snouck Hurgronje and Sayyid ʿUthman had met, the latter addressed the former with his Muslim name, ʿAbd al-Ghaffar.

32 J.A. van der Chijs had been an inspector for indigenous education and was a close friend of Holle, see Van den Berg, *Holle*, 10; 119. This person should not be confused with P.N. Van der Chijs (d. 1889), who resided in Jeddah initially as a shipping agent and later also as a staff member of the Dutch consulate, cf. Laffan, *Islamic nationhood*, 56, 87.

33 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje.' The letter also contains two notes in the margin: one refers to a letter that Sayyid ʿUthman had sent to a son in Hadramaut to ask his assistance in getting information on epigraphy there; the other mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman has enclosed some linguistic notes. These notes suggest that there had been previous contact between the two men prior to this letter.

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Snouck stressed the importance of Sayyid 'Uthman's knowledge to the formulation of government policy towards Islam. Both articles were entitled 'An Arab ally of the Netherlands-Indian government.' Snouck Hurgronje praised him for his struggle against the *tarekat*, because, as Snouck Hurgronje wrote, 'the *shaykhs* and their followers are the most dangerous enemies of the Dutch authority in the Indies,' comparable to the threat of the Sanusiyya *tariqa* to the French administration in Algeria. The article concluded with the observation that 'one Arab like Othman ibn Jahja is more valuable to us than many "liberal", wine-drinking Regents.'[34]

Interestingly, Snouck Hurgronje commented on these initial contacts with Sayyid 'Uthman in a letter dated 14 November 1886 to his Hungarian friend and fellow founder of modern Islamic studies Ignaz Goldziher (1850–1921). In this letter, Snouck Hurgronje wrote that Sayyid 'Uthman complained about the ill-treatment of the Arab minority by the colonial administration, which he called 'Arabophobia' and voiced his fear that this might one day prove fatal to Sayyid 'Uthman. Since Snouck Hurgronje knew many of Sayyid 'Uthman's Arab and Javanese friends personally, he considered it his duty to stand up for educated Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies.[35]

After August 1886, Sayyid 'Uthman remained in contact with Snouck Hurgronje, as other letters demonstrate. In a letter from 4 January 1887, Sayyid 'Uthman wrote that he had heard from Van der Chijs and others that his name had been mentioned positively in the Dutch press, and because of this he asked Snouck Hurgronje to help him obtain a position in which he could work with Dutch leaders:

> For these reasons we request a position with the rulers of the Dutch state because I have this good reputation and behaviour. This will also be beneficial to the people […] and you are my mediator in this.

Accompanying the letter are a number of his books and charts (*jadwal*) that Snouck had apparently asked for, in a letter that is now lost. Sayyid 'Uthman introduced this parcel as follows:

34 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Een Arabische bondgenoot,' 85. A Regent is the indigenous head of a territory called a Regency. In this capacity, he was also supervisor of Muslim affairs, which made the wine drinking in this quote even more delicate.

35 Snouck Hurgronje, *Scholarship and friendship*, 70. De Jonge,'Contradictory and against the grain,' has pointed out that Snouck Hurgronje had an ambiguous position towards the Arabs: despite his plea to stop the pass and quarter system, he considered Arabs a danger and potential agents of Pan-Islamism.

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> Most of them are in Batavian Malay despite the inadequacy of its grammatical structure. And I am not capable of writing, but necessity prompts me to do it, just like the lack of water permits the performing of the *tayammum*.[36]

Next he mentioned a list of titles of the publications sent. This list is important because the works mentioned show what information Snouck Hurgronje had on Sayyid 'Uthman's ideas at this stage of their relationship and, as such, these publications were helping Snouck to form an even better opinion on Sayyid 'Uthman. The list reads as follows:

> *Kitab islah al-hal fi talab al-halal*
> *Kitab al-tuffaha al-wardiyya*
> *Kitab al-fara'id*
> *Kitab nafa'is al-nakhla fi adillat al-qibla*
> *Risala fi da'wa al-zawjayn*[37]
> *Risala fiha su'al jawab fi l-kitaba*[38]
> *Kitab simt al-shudhur*
> The [Malay, NK] translation of *al-Wathiqa*
> *Qamus saghir*
> *Adab al-insan*
> *Cempaka mulia*
> *Jadwal al-nikah*
> *Jadwal al-rida'*
> *Jadwal al-talaq wa-l-'idda*
> *Jadwal al-tajwid*
> *Jadwal al-mawazin wa-l-hudud*

He asked Snouck for his comments and to determine whether 'they are useful for the Muslims citizens of the Dutch state [...] so that I will obtain the best possible approval of the Dutch authorities by means of your elevated interest [...].'[39]

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36 This is the ritual ablution preceding the prayer, which is carried out with sand when there is no water available, see E.I. (2), X, 399–400, s.v.

37 This title on 'the claim of the husband and wife' must refer to the *Mas'ilah da'wa harta antara laki isteri atau antara ahl warith satu sama lain* on the *guno-gini* practice, dealt with in the previous chapter.

38 This title translates as 'Treatise containing questions and answers on the making of written records' and is most probably a reference to his 1881 *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya*.

39 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Letter to Snouck Hurgronje, 4 January 1887.'

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Virtually all of the publications mentioned in this letter are kept in Leiden University Library and it is clear that these items are the copies that Sayyid ʿUthman is referring to in his letter. Interestingly, some of these publications have a handwritten note on them in which Sayyid ʿUthman explains to Snouck briefly what the book concerned is about, e.g. the *Kitab islah al-hal fi talab al-halal*.[40]

As we have seen, I have dealt with all publications mentioned on this list, apart from one, the *Cempaka mulia*, 'The white flowered tree.'[41] I have not paid it any attention yet, because it was published in January 1886, i.e. after Sayyid ʿUthman had become the object of debate. This Malay booklet sheds further light on Sayyid ʿUthman's view on how men should behave towards the government. The booklet deals with the nature of man (*hal manusia*) and starts with a number of general observations on mankind. Compared to other living beings, man is better placed because, amongst other things, he can use both hands; he has ethical understanding as well as reason and intelligence (*akal kepintaran*). Thanks to his intelligence, man possesses steam trains, steamships, the telegraph, drilled wells (*sumur bor*)[42] and good textbooks on agriculture, trade and similar topics (p. 3). One of the ways a person could distinguish himself favorably from others was by good behaviour (*perangai baik*). Such a person should have three qualities: patience, modesty and thoughtfulness (*pikiran panjang*) (p. 8). A thoughtful person should not trespass the laws of the state (*perinta negeri*) and avoid conflicts that cause trouble to the authorities (pp. 13–15). This idea is expressed even more specifically later on in the book:

> Moreover, a person who falls under an effective power (*kekuasahan yang empunya kuasa*) should not go against its laws, because if he goes against its laws, he will certainly destroy himself (pp. 18–19).

A sensible person, Sayyid ʿUthman continues, who enjoys well-being and prosperity from the government (*dari sebab keadilan*) should be deeply thankful and not cause any trouble, for these troubles will come back on himself. By behaving like this, such a person also trespasses the rules of the Prophet Muhammad, who said in a Hadith that if one is treated well, one should reciprocate this (pp. 19–20).

40 See above Chapter Three, n. 62.

41 This tree is the *kamboja*, and is often planted in cemeteries.

42 Since 1873 the government had drilled these so-called 'Artesian wells' as part of the water supply, see ENI, i, 62–64, s.v. artesische putten.

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In order to illustrate the good character of the government (*keadilan governemen*), the booklet mentions eleven beneficial matters. The first one is religious freedom for every group (*bangsa*) and the guarantee by the government that each group can practice their religion undisturbed. Moreover, the government has assisted in the building of a number of mosques for Muslims. The remaining benefits are freedom from slavery (*kebebasan merdeka*); protection of life and property by the police (*polisi*); the freedom to choose one's means of livelihood; the possibility to own farm land that is not destroyed by others or animals; the possibility to transfer information by mail or telegraph in a fast and cheap manner; fast and cheap transportation by steam train and steamship; public street-lighting; free and clean drinking water from drilled wells; irrigation works, bridges and roads; and, finally, various institutions that guard the state, like offices, strongholds, and military and other kinds of stations (pp. 20–22). Anybody aware of all this, Sayyid ʿUthman continues, should conclude that the government is good and takes excellent care of its citizens, and that for this God will reward this kingdom for hundreds of years. Such a person should thank the government and not oppose it (p. 23).[43]

Although Sayyid ʿUthman had already expressed his basic ideas on how indigenous Muslims should behave towards the government in earlier publications, this text is the most elaborate testimony on this issue of his career and this can perhaps be explained as follows: As we have just seen, Sayyid ʿUthman was in close touch with K.F. Holle, even staying with him on his estate Waspada in January 1886. Holle was known to have tried to improve agricultural methods among the farmers of West Java and, in order to achieve this, he produced writings in indigenous languages, like the agricultural journal *Mitra na tani*.[44] I think that this contact with Holle motivated Sayyid ʿUthman to mention agricultural publications in the *Cempaka mulia* as a tribute to human intelligence. Given the circumstances at the time the *Cempaka mulia* was written, i.e. Sayyid ʿUthman being an object of debate, and in view of Holle's concern about the reputation of Sayyid ʿUthman, we might wonder whether Holle had perhaps stimulated Sayyid ʿUthman to write down his ideas on how a person should behave towards the colonial government in this explicit form.

On 8 July 1888, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote the final letter from this period of initial contacts with Snouck Hurgronje. The letter suggests that cooperation between the two men had already begun, for Sayyid ʿUthman confirmed Snouck Hurgronje's request for help with the preparation of a dictionary in the

43 In January 1897 a Sundanese translation was published, made by a certain Raden Azhari ibn Raden Haji Irshad from Bandung.

44 Van den Berg, *Holle*, 85–101.

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FIGURE 6 *Letter of Sayyid 'Uthman to C. Snouck Hurgronje, 8 July 1888*
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language of the Hadramis and sends him samples of different Arabic dialects. He also asks Snouck Hurgronje to send him copies of newspapers in the Netherlands from the previous year or earlier that mention him and his *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*, because these were not available to him in Batavia. He makes plain the reason for this request:

> With the help of this I want to make a request to the authorities (*ra'is*)[45] to obtain my desire, which is the position of advisor (*atfisur*), perhaps with the Arabic designation of *mufti*.

He continued to explain that he was the only person who was consulted about *fiqh* matters in family law and inheritance law by Javanese, Malay and other judges, and that some European leaders (*ba'd ru'asa' al-Ifranj*) in Batavia had requested his help in excerpting books and examining the *shaykhs* of the *tariqa*. His reason for obliging these requests was to maintain his good reputation with the people, so that they would not dare to speak badly about him. In this letter, once again, Sayyid 'Uthman appears to lobby for being given the position of *mufti* in the service of the government.

## 5 More Writings against the *Tarekat* and Some Other Writings

In addition to the above mentioned writings that Sayyid 'Uthman had sent to Snouck, he continued writing and publishing a number of other books. These writings show that he remained active as both a leader of the Muslim community and as a scholar.

A major publication of a scholarly nature appeared in January 1888; namely, a substantial Arabic-Malay dictionary intended for students of religion to study Arabic Islamic texts, the *Mukhtasar al-qamus*. The copy in Leiden University bears a handwritten dedication in Arabic from the author to 'his friend Dr. Snouck Hurgronje – may his glory last forever.'[46]

Sayyid 'Uthman also continued writing on the dangers of the mystical brotherhoods and an interesting work on this topic appeared in June 1888. The

45 Perhaps Sayyid 'Uthman is referring to the Governor General Otto van Rees, to whom Van den Berg had written favourably of Sayyid 'Uthman, as we have seen above. Possibly, Van den Berg had done this at the request of Sayyid 'Uthman, who made similar requests to Snouck Hurgronje, as is shown here.

46 Shelf number 8198 E 17. For more information, see Kaptein, 'Arabic-Malay lexicography,' 125–133.

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work is in Malay and bears the Arabic title *I'anat al-mustarshidin 'ala fahm al-din*, 'Assistance to those who seek guidance in understanding religion.' The work is preceded by eight pages of lithographed correspondence (undated) between Sayyid 'Uthman and a certain Sayyid Muhammad ibn Tahir al-Haddad, who must have been a local Arab preacher. From this correspondence, it appears that Sayyid 'Uthman had written a letter to this preacher in which he advised him that after the Friday service he should warn the believers against two matters: the performing of the *salat* without serenity in the constituent movements and the careless reciting of the Qur'an and, secondly, the use of the *gambus* (lute) in mystical gatherings. In his answer Sayyid Muhammad mentions that some Muslim scholars had approved of the use of the *gambus* and that venerated *sayyids*, like Habib 'Abd Allah al-Haddad, had attended meetings in which this musical instrument was used; and this implied that its use was permitted. The work by Sayyid 'Uthman under discussion was written to refute this opinion. The work deals with the proper way that leaders of a *tarekat* should behave. They should stick to the Shari'a and follow the example of the Prophet and dispose of certain personal qualities, like self control and piety. It also says that at that time people were demonstrating all kinds of scandalous deeds (*manakir*), like exaggerating their position and status; claiming that they possess miraculous powers; listening to the *gambus*, justifying this by pointing to the saintliness (*wilaya*) of people who had approved of this; performing the *salat* in an incorrect manner and denouncing the truth. These people should be admonished to leave all this behind.[47]

In response to negative reactions 'from stubborn fanatics' on this book, Sayyid 'Uthman wrote another one; namely, *Matiyyat al-diraya wa-l-riwaya fi tafriqat bayna al-wilaya wa-l-ghanaya*, 'The instrument for knowledge and transmission on the distinction between saintliness and sin,' which was published in September 1888. In this book the scholarly and personal qualities of a person as preconditions for joining a *tarekat* were repeated. Likewise a number of forbidden matters were mentioned, including, once again, the playing of and listening to *gambus* music. In addition to this, a few other matters were mentioned, like 'mixing with people who imbibe wine, and enjoying the entertainment of Europeans, called musical *komidi*, in the company of unveiled women.'[48]

47 Sayyid 'Uthman, *I'anat al-mustarshidin 'ala fahm al-din*, 1–18.

48 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Matiyyat al-diraya*, 16 The Leiden copy of this book also contains a number of loose leaves with approvals of these two works of Sayyid 'Uthman. The first one by 'Abd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad (from Tarim) and the second one by Muhammad Babasil, the Shafi'i *mufti* in Mecca. Another leaf contains a poem by Sayyid 'Uthman's brother

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A third anti-*tarekat* work appeared in February 1889, the *Arti tarekat dengan pendek bicaranya*, 'A short explanation of the *tarekat*.' Once again, the brochure severely condemns the false *tarekat* teachers and their scandalous activities and it was meant as a short and popular summary of his earlier works. On the last page, Sayyid 'Uthman refers to his own Arabic and Malay publications on the issue, which were available through him in Kampong Petamburan.

In this period also a short Malay treatise appeared in 1887, entitled *Risalah ada di dalamnya hadith Keluarga dinaqal dari kitab-kitab hadith yang mu'tamad*, 'Treatise containing Prophetic traditions on His Family, transmitted from the reliable Hadith works.' On the basis of texts from the Qur'an and the Hadith this booklet demonstrates the special position of the *sayyids* and the respect they deserve.

A final work from this period is of a very general nature and appeared in March 1889, *Irshad al-anam fi tarjamat arkan al-Islam*, 'The right guidance for mankind: The translation of the pillars of Islam.' As the title indicates, this Malay booklet is a general introduction to Islam. It starts by briefly mentioning the articles of the faith; namely, belief in God, belief in the angels, belief in His words, belief in the Prophets, belief in the Day of Resurrection, belief in predestination (*takdir Allah atas tiap-tiap kejadian*), 'as was already mentioned one by one in the *Kitab sifat dua puluh*, 'The book of the twenty attributes' (p. 1). In the remainder of the booklet the five pillars of Islam are dealt with: the uttering of the profession of the faith (*shahada*), the *salat*, the *zakat*, fasting in the month of Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca. This booklet was translated into Javanese in 1893 and Sundanese in 1896[49] and has been reprinted numerous times and is still widely available in Indonesia today.

In these writings, Sayyid 'Uthman showed himself once more to be a serious scholar of religion who vehemently battled against deviations from Islam, and in particular wrong sides of the *tarekat*.

## 6 Entering the Service of the Government

As a result of the letters and publications of Sayyid 'Uthman and his good reputation in scholarly and government circles, Snouck was fully convinced of the usefulness and reliability of Sayyid 'Uthman, even before they had ever met.

Hashim, who disapproved of a refutation of Sayyid 'Uthman's *I'anat al-mustarshidin* by a certain Ahmad al-Kaf, entitled *al-Minshar fi al-radd 'ala man yushaddid fi tahrim al-utar*.

49 Respectively, by a certain Haji Amin from Pekalongan, and the *mantri guru* from Sukabumi.

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Consequently, after Snouck arrived in Indonesia in May 1889, he discussed involving Sayyid ʿUthman in the colonial administration with the newly appointed Governor General, Mr C. Pijnakker Hordijk (1847–1908). Subsequently, Snouck Hurgronje discussed the matter with Sayyid ʿUthman and, in a letter dated 20 June 1889 to the Director for Education, Worship, and Industry (*Directeur van Onderwijs, Eeredienst en Nijverheid*), Snouck Hurgronje proposed that Sayyid ʿUthman be appointed his assistant in monitoring Islam in the Netherlands East Indies. According to Snouck, Sayyid ʿUthman was the ideal candidate for this, because of his vast expertise in Islamic theological and legal literature and his huge knowledge of current Muslim affairs due to his wide network of pupils and followers. Because Sayyid ʿUthman did not have means of his own and had to work for a living, Snouck proposed giving him an allowance of a hundred guilders a month.[50] This allowance would secure the continuation of the cooperation and, as Snouck expected, Sayyid ʿUthman would tune his teaching and writing activities as much as possible to the interests of the government. Aware of Sayyid ʿUthman's delicate position, Snouck Hurgronje suggested that he would pay him discreetly himself, as open cooperation with the infidel government could diminish Sayyid ʿUthman's authority among his fellow Muslims.[51] Snouck Hurgronje's requests were granted and this marked the beginning of a fruitful partnership.

Once Sayyid ʿUthman had become the assistant of Snouck, they were in touch on a regular basis about Islamic policies. In the diary of Snouck (24 July 1889) we see an example of this where he mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman functioned as informant about Naqshabandiyya followers.[52] In addition to these consultancy activities, Sayyid ʿUthman remained active in producing two writings that did not have a very direct link with colonial policies but are, nevertheless, important because they spread a positive image about the Dutch government and completely fitted into Snouck's ideas of Dutch Islam policy. Moreover, these writings will have further improved the relationship between Snouck and Sayyid ʿUthman and were helpful in formalizing the position of Sayyid ʿUthman as advisor to the administration two years later.

The first major publication from this period is a Malay work with the Arabic title *Manhaj al-istiqama fi l-din bi-l-salama*, 'The right way to practice religion in freedom' (sc. from evil) and dates from June 1890. This work aims to explain

50 According to Djajadiningrat, *Herinneringen*, 119, as an Assistant Wedono in 1900 he received a salary of *f* 100,– a month. A *wedono* is the indigenous head of a district that forms a subdivision of a Regency.

51 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1510–1511.

52 Leiden University Libary, Or 7931, 21. I owe this reference to Michael Laffan.

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true Islam and wants to inform and edify the believers and prevent them from committing errors, 'in the hope that these three points will also be beneficial to the state' (p. 2). The most interesting part of the booklet is the discussion of the concept of delusion (*ghurur*). As his first example, Sayyid 'Uthman again pointed to the false practices surrounding the mystical brotherhoods, while the second example dealt with the Arabic concept of *jihad*, commonly translated as Holy War. According to him, the *jihad* or, in Malay, *perang sabil* could only be proclaimed if certain conditions had been fulfilled and, therefore, this concept was incorrectly used to justify the uprisings in Cilegon, Banten and in Bekasi. The supporters of these uprisings could not, therefore, be considered as defenders of the faith, but rather as creators of chaos (pp. 22–24).[53]

In particular, this condemnation of the Cilegon rebellion from 1888 will have made an extremely favourable impression on the Dutch. This affair was a brief and bloody uprising against the Dutch in Cilegon, West Java, in which a number of Dutch officials were killed.[54] Because this affair seemed to confirm the Dutch fear of the *tarekat* as potentially violent, the name Cilegon would become an important symbol in anti-*tarekat* rhetoric.

Moreover, Sayyid 'Uthman revisited particular points in the *Manhaj al-istiqama* that he had dealt with in previous works; but, he also raised new issues, for example, the prohibition on reading fictitious works, like the *Hikayat Nabi bercukur*, *Hikayat Amir Hamza* and *Hikayat Muhammad Hanafiyyah*[55] (p. 45), and he rejected the teaching of the seven grades of Being (*martabat tujuh*[56]) (p. 51). Another interesting point is his opinion that the teaching of religion should be restricted to only those teachers who have requested and obtained a licence from the government (p. 60). This latter point is a reference to the fact that religious teachers were obliged to register when they wanted to teach. This registration was an instrument of the Dutch authorities to control religious instruction and was started in 1889 at the initiative of Snouck and K.F. Holle.[57]

The second publication, which Sayyid 'Uthman produced immediately after he had entered the service of the government, bears the Arabic title *Taftih al-'uyun 'ala fasad al-zunun*, 'The opening of the eyes for wrong opinions.' This Malay booklet dates from March 1891 and is yet another admonition to behave correctly. The brochure was written to demonstrate that the opinion of some

53 See also Azra, 'Hadrami scholars,' 254; Amiq, 'Two fatwas.'

54 Kartodirdjo, *The peasants' revolt*.

55 See for these well-known Malay literary works, Braginsky, *The heritage*.

56 This is the Malay name for the pantheistic doctrine that the universe emanates from God in seven grades of His Being.

57 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1157; ENI, v, 167–8, s.v. Goeroe-ordonnantie.

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natives that the possessions of non-Muslims could be stolen or taken by fraud was wrong. Central to the booklet is the concept of *aman*, 'protection.' As mentioned in his *Adab al-insan*, the Dutch had brought protection to all peoples of the kingdom and, for this reason, one could enjoy, for instance, freedom of religion; but for the same reason it was forbidden to take the possession of others. It made no difference whether the concept of *aman* was employed in a Muslim or a non-Muslim territory; it was in effect in both domains (pp. 7–8). In addition to this issue, other forbidden matters, which had also been dealt with in previous works, were referred to by Sayyid ʿUthman. In order to eliminate perpetrators, Sayyid ʿUthman suggested that the *kepala agama negeri* (the local heads of religion, i.e. the Regents) hand them over to the police (p. 22). Because the correct understanding of religion is central to avoiding sins, good teachers were considered to be important, and Sayyid ʿUthman thought the head of religion (*kepala agama*) should be responsible for their appointment (p. 30).[58]

In both the *Manhaj al-istiqama* and the *Taftih al-ʿuyun* Sayyid ʿUthman was thus completely in line with government policies and Snouck Hurgronje was most pleased with his assistant's writings, as we will see in the next section.

## 7 Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs, 1891

On 5 July 1890, Snouck offered a copy of the *Manhaj al-istiqama* to the Governor General, together with a short explanation, on behalf of Sayyid ʿUthman. In the accompanying letter, Snouck pointed to Sayyid ʿUthman's opinion that the necessary preconditions to perform the *jihad* were absent in the Dutch East Indies and he underlined the great authority of the writings of Sayyid ʿUthman, which had resulted in a decline in the number of *tarekat* followers.[59] A few days after Snouck's letter, on 11 July 1890, an anonymous review of the *Manhaj al-istiqama* appeared in the Dutch colonial newspaper *De Locomotief* under the title 'A useful teacher.' The review mentioned Sayyid ʿUthman's condemnation of the riots in Cilegon and Bekasi and, moreover, referred to his opinion that the idea of *perang sabil* had never been applicable to these uprisings. After a remark that anyone who preached Holy War against the government or the Europeans in the Indies would find Sayyid ʿUthman as his opponent, the article ended with the following wish: 'May this useful booklet

58 On 22 January 1897 a Sundanese translation of the *Taftih al-ʿuyun* appeared, made by a certain Raden Haji Azhari from Bandung.

59 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1513–1514.

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find many readers, especially among the natives, and may the writer get his well-deserved appreciation in European circles.' I think this review was written by Snouck and that he wrote both the letter to the Governor General and this newspaper article to demonstrate that Sayyid 'Uthman was doing his work properly. As such these writings were also a way to gain official and public support for Sayyid 'Uthman and can be seen as a prelude to Snouck's later request to formalize his position as Honorary Advisor.

In a later letter of 5 April 1891 to the Director for Education, Worship, and Industry, Snouck again pointed to Sayyid 'Uthman's loyalty to the government and his unceasing efforts to propagate the obligation to be obedient to the administration among the native people. In his personal contacts with Sayyid 'Uthman, Snouck had noticed how willing he was to devote his energies and his network to reach this aim. For these reasons, Snouck proposed 'to confer a decoration on Sayyid 'Uthman, which he would appreciate, [...] by appointing him as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs.' It is noteworthy that Snouck added that it was important to avoid the impression that the government was mainly interested in Sayyid 'Uthman's religious role and that, therefore, the designation of *Arab* Affairs took preference above the title of Honorary Advisor for *Muslim* Affairs.[60]

This proposal was granted and Sayyid 'Uthman was officially appointed on 3 May 1891. He would hold this position until his death in 1914.[61] It is not mentioned who took the initiative to make this proposal, but in view of Snouck's statement that Sayyid 'Uthman would appreciate the appointment, we can assume that the initiative came from Sayyid 'Uthman. This stands to reason, because, as we have seen above, in his letter to Snouck Hurgronje of 8 July 1888, Sayyid 'Uthman expressed his ambition to become involved in the government in an official position, as advisor or, as he preferred to call himself, as *mufti*.

## 8 Issues with Direct Relevance to the Administration

After Sayyid 'Uthman had become Honorary Advisor the cooperation with Snouck Hurgronje remained intensive. From the archives of Snouck Hurgronje it can be gathered that in his position as 'government *mufti*,' Snouck was often asked for religious advice on particular issues, and that sometimes Sayyid 'Uthman was asked as well. In his recent book, Michael Laffan speaks of 'the

60 Ibid., 1513.

61 *Regeeringsalmanak*, 1894/II, 414, where he was mentioned for the first time in this capacity. See the issue of 1914/II 435, where he was mentioned for the last time.

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two *muftis* of Batavia,' and suggests that many of these requests were actually answered by Sayyid 'Uthman.[62] In other cases, Sayyid 'Uthman was approached first, for instance when Snouck was traveling in Aceh, after which they discussed the issue together.[63] Evidently, Snouck relied heavily on Sayyid 'Uthman; for instance, in a recommendation given to the Director for Education, Worship, and Industry, he mentioned that this was a collective piece of advice on behalf of Sayyid 'Uthman and himself, adding that he had assisted Sayyid 'Uthman with materials in European script, while the resources in Arabic script had been studied by Sayyid 'Uthman independently.[64] This seems to suggest a kind of distribution of the work: Snouck dealing with materials originating from and meant for the colonial bureaucracy and Sayyid 'Uthman working on materials from and directed to the Muslim community.

Of the activities that both men cooperated in, a number of issues will be dealt with here. Since this is a book on Sayyid 'Uthman I do not do this on the basis of documents from the colonial bureaucracy, but primarily through the lens of Sayyid 'Uthman's writings.

### *Wasiat*

The first major issue in which Sayyid 'Uthman became involved after his appointment as advisor was the circulation of the so-called *wasiat*, or Last Admonition, which created a great deal of unrest among the native population. These documents claimed to originate from Arabia and to have been spread in the Netherlands East Indies by returning pilgrims from Mecca, and surfaced from time to time, notably in 1863, 1878, 1891 and 1904. These documents were in Arabic or in a vernacular language and related a dream that the guardian of the grave of the Prophet in Medina had had, after he had fallen asleep next to the grave. In this dream the Prophet appeared and pointed out that the Last Judgement was near as a result of the absence of religious zeal. In order to achieve a postponement of the Last Day, or to prepare oneself for it, the readers or the hearers of this admonition had to repent and separate themselves from the evildoers, spread the truth of the *wasiat* and reward those who communicated this message to them.[65]

As we have seen, the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 132–137) also relates that in 1891 Sayyid 'Uthman confronted and condemned a charlatan who spread the

62 Laffan, *The makings*, 162. See also Laffan, 'Collaborators.'

63 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 987.

64 Ibid., 828.

65 Sayyid 'Uthman, *al-I'lan*, 3 and his *al-Nasiha al-murdiyya*, 2–5. Ricklefs, *Polarising*, 79–81 mentions the circulation of another type of admonitions in Java.

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*wasiat* and, subsequently, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a book called *al-Nasiha al-murdiyya*, about this. The full title of the book reads *al-Nasiha al-murdiyya fi l-radd ʿala l-wasiyya al-manamiyya*, 'The pleasant advice in refutation of the Last Admonition originating from a dream.' This booklet is in Malay and was published in December 1891. Sayyid ʿUthman provided a number of religious and practical arguments in the booklet that showed that the *wasiat* was deceptive. Among the religious arguments, he mentioned that man should consult a religious scholar for religious knowledge and not base oneself on a letter; that it was forbidden to take religious issues from dreams; and that only God knew the time of the Last Day (p. 6–9). In addition, he gave practical arguments demonstrating that the document was fake: the grave of the Prophet was closed in such a way that it was impossible to sleep next to it; the person who received the dream was known under different names; when Sayyid ʿUthman stayed in Mecca and Medina he had never heard of this and, if such a document had circulated in Mecca, the ruler (*hakim*) would have intervened; and the mosque in Medina was closed after the evening prayer (pp. 14–17). In conclusion, the believer is ordered not to pay attention to the *wasiat* (p. 19).

Interestingly, the *Locomotief* from 15 January 1891 published a very positive review of Sayyid ʿUthman's book, under the title 'Mohammedaansche theologie.' The review ended with the hope that the booklet would end the spread of this disquieting *wasiat*. The review was not signed, but most probably was written by Snouck, like the review on the *Manhaj al-istiqama*, which also appeared in the *Locomotief.* Snouck Hurgronje had direct access to this newspaper, since he published his column '*Brieven van een wedono-pensioen*' in this medium in 1891–1892.

A similar *wasiat* appeared in 1904 and Sayyid ʿUthman reacted again with a counter brochure. This time the brochure, from March 1904, was bilingual (Arabic and Malay) and was entitled *al-Iʿlan bi-l-nasiha al-matluba fi firyat al-wasiyya al-makdhuba*, 'The statement with the requested advice about the falsity of the deceitful testament'. In it Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that after he had written his *al-Nasiha al-murdiyya* the issue had disappeared for some time. But now that it had flared up again, he was once more ready to expose the lies contained in the document. His arguments were basically the same as in his earlier work, but he added wittily that after the previous announcements of the Last Day, the sun had come up again every day. Moreover, pilgrims for the season of 1904 had not reported anything that confirmed the *wasiat*. This document had only been spread to gain money from the people in the form of *zakat*, *sadaqa* or gifts from pilgrims to Mecca (pp. 2–10). Moreover, the religious prohibitions against this document, which were mentioned in the *al-Nasiha al-murdiyya*, were repeated (pp. 10–16).

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The colonial government feared that these eschatological documents would cause unrest and rebellion among the population and, for this reason, watched its distribution closely.[66] In an official piece of advice to the Governor General, dated 10 March 1894, Snouck Hurgronje suggested that the anti-*wasiat* brochure of Sayyid ʿUthman should be distributed to remedy the religious unrest on the West Coast of Sumatra. The previous edition of such a work had been subsidized by the government in 1892, so that Sayyid ʿUthman had been able to sell it below the market price, or even distribute it free of charge, but this brochure was now almost out of stock. For this reason Snouck suggested that the Governor General subsidized this new version. The dissemination of this pamphlet, Snouck added, should not be done by the government, in order to avoid distrust, but rather through reliable native intermediates.[67] Also in 1904, Snouck advised the Resident of Besuki to distribute the booklet in order to combat the *wasiat* in the Residency.[68] Thus, we see here an interesting example of how Sayyid ʿUthman's works were disseminated at the cost of the government to prevent unrest among the native population.

### *The New Friday Mosque in Palembang*

As examined in the previous chapter, the issue of the duplication of Friday mosques (*taʿaddud*) had emerged at an earlier stage of Sayyid ʿUthman's career. From 1893 onwards, the issue became relevant again and, as one of the best known scholars in the Netherlands East Indies, Sayyid ʿUthman was consulted on the issue from various sides. At a later stage the writings on this matter became the object of polemics between Sayyid ʿUthman and a prominent scholar in Mecca, resulting in a bombardment of writings on this issue.

The issue started in the middle of Ramadan 1310 (April 1893), when Sayyid ʿUthman received various requests from people from Palembang relating to the *taʿaddud* issue.[69] In this city in South Sumatra a local notable, by the name

66 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1222–1225.

67 Ibid., 1520–1521. Interestingly, Snouck mentioned to the Governor General that there was no use in sending Sayyid ʿUthman to this region, because he was not very popular in that part of the country due to his attacks on Shaykh Ismaʿil (see above, p. 106) and his polemics with Ahmad Khatib (see next section).

68 See Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1910–1911 and Snouck, 'De laatste vermaning van Mohammed.'

69 This background to the issue is related in a short piece by Sayyid ʿUthman, which is kept in Leiden University Library under the title 'Verzameling van diverse fatwa's' (8198 A 2). The development of the issue is also explained in another work in Malay by Sayyid ʿUthman, see his *Dafʿ al-waqiʿa*, 3–4. A similar issue also emerged in Amuntai and Sayyid ʿUthman was also consulted in this case, Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 829.

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of Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid, had built a new mosque in Lawang Kidul, which he wanted to use as the Friday mosque. This idea was not accepted in Palembang, because there was already a Friday mosque in use. Thus, the question arose whether or not the new mosque could also be regarded as a Friday mosque. Because the question could not be resolved, a number of people from both the old and the new mosque, as well as from the religious bureaucracy in Palembang, such as the *penghulu*, sent letters to Sayyid ʿUthman asking for an explanation and a *fatwa* on the issue.[70] After Sayyid ʿUthman had informed them that he would answer the issue after Ramadan, it is reported that on the next day,

> a number of people from the party of Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid came to Batavia aiming to pay a large sum of money (*ongkos banyak*) to get a *fatwa* that declared the building of the Lawang Kidul Mosque valid.[71]

After the fasting month, in May 1893, Sayyid ʿUthman published an extensive work in Malay bearing the Arabic title *Jamʿ al-fawa'id mim-ma yataʿallaqa bi-salat al-jumʿa wa-l-masajid*, 'The collection of useful lessons on things related to the Friday prayer and to the mosques.' This work is of a theoretical nature and although it was written in reaction to the situation in Palembang, this is not specifically mentioned. The first part of the work (pp. 1–56) deals with the Friday prayer and everything that comes with this, like the merits of this prayer from a religious point of view, and its status within Islamic law. Most interesting are the parts on the question of the duplication of the Friday mosque (*taʿaddud*) (pp. 31–51). It explains that a new Friday mosque can be founded for three reasons. Firstly, when the existing mosque becomes too small; secondly, when there is fear that there may be conflict within a congregation, and, finally, if the worshippers have to travel long distances to reach the mosque. The book also clarifies extensively how the territory of a Friday mosque is constituted in terms of topographical items, and it explains that a territory might be split, for instance, by rivers, agricultural lands, graveyards and urbanization, thus generating room for a new territory cum Friday mosque (pp. 48–49). The second part of the book (pp. 56–83) deals with all kinds of issues related to the

70 Snouck Hurgronje, had a copy of the (Malay) letter from the *penghulu*, see Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 826–827.

71 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Tabyin al-khati'ayn*, 6. In his *Taftih al-muqlatayn*, 27 Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that after they had tried to bribe him, they also tried to do this with 'someone else.' This must have been Snouck, see Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 832, 1928.

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actual building of the mosque; for instance, how to determine the direction for the prayer niche (p. 66).

Concerning the case of Palembang, Sayyid ʿUthman issued a special *fatwa* in which he stated that the new mosque could not be regarded as a Friday mosque, because it was too close to the existing Friday mosque; for that reason, the legal conditions for establishing a new Friday mosque had not been met. This *fatwa* thus obstructed the aspiration of Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid, but he did not accept it and consequently directed himself to Mecca for the recognition of his mosque. In fact, he received permission from Mecca to use his mosque as a Friday mosque and, consequently, he returned to Sayyid ʿUthman and requested him to reconsider his previous denial.[72]

Subsequently, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a work in Arabic, entitled *Muzil al-awham wa-l-taraddud fi amr salat al-jumʿa bi-l-taʿaddud*, 'The remover of errors and hesitation on the issue of the unjustly held Friday prayer.' This book was published in September 1894 and in it Sayyid ʿUthman explained that the positive opinion of the *mufti* of Mecca on the issue was based on false data and, consequently, he reiterated his denial.[73]

Once again Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid did not accept this and this time called upon Ahmad Khatib Minangkabau (1860–1916) for support. This person was a scholar of Minangkabau descent who was teaching in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca. He was popular among Muslims in the Netherlands East Indies, who used to consult him on various matters. He published books in Arabic and Malay and he is best known for his fierce attacks on matrilineal inheritance customs in West Sumatra. He was also notorious for his hostile attitude towards the Dutch colonial administration.[74] Ahmad Khatib wrote a book opposing Sayyid ʿUthman's just mentioned *Muzil al-awham* and demonstrated his approval of the new Friday mosque in Palembang. The book also appeared in 1894 with the revealing title *Sulh al-jamaʿatayn bi-jawaz taʿaddud al-jumʿatayn*, 'The agreement between the two groups on the permission of the two Friday mosques.' In this publication, Ahmad Khatib fiercely attacks Sayyid ʿUthman, questioning his scholarly authority and his intellectual integrity.

This work started a fierce polemic between the two. In his unpublished Arabic autobiography, Ahmad Khatib describes the beginning of this polemic as follows:

72 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Dafʿ al-waqiʿa*, 3–4.

73 In 1895, Sayyid ʿUthman published a comparable work in Malay, bearing the Arabic title *Iqnaʿ al-maʿanid bi-ma fi bina' al-masajid*, 'The convincing of the stubborn of that which has been said about the building of mosques.'

74 See on him E.I. (3), s.v. Ahmad Khatib.

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> And when my treatise reached Sayyid ʿUthman, he became very angry, because I had written a refutation of his book, for I was a native of the land of the Jawa (*min al-Jawiyyin*), while he was a *sayyid* and the most important scholar (*akbar ʿalim*) in the land of the Jawa and he had the full support of the Dutch government. Next he wrote a fierce refutation of my book and he belittled me in this work, which he called *Taftih al-muqlatayn fi l-radd ʿala Sulh al-jamaʿatayn*.[75]

The full title of this book by Sayyid ʿUthman reads *Taftih al-muqlatayn wa-tabyin al-mafsadatayn al-mukhabbaʾatayn fi l-risala al-muʿamma bi-Sulh al-jamaʿatayn*, 'The opening of the two eyes and the explanation of the two implicit malicious acts dealing with the obscure essay *The agreement between the two groups*' and it came out in 1895. From this book it appears that Sayyid ʿUthman must have felt terribly insulted by Ahmad Khatib, and at the beginning of the book he reiterates his scholarly credentials, pointing out that he had studied in Mecca, in Hadramaut and in Tunis, and that he had always enjoyed great support from widely renowned scholars for his scholarly writings (pp. 14–16).[76] In the book Sayyid ʿUthman repeated the development of the entire issue, and mentioned that he had prepared the book meticulously. For instance, he had derived the information on the local circumstances in Palembang from maps, which he got from the Assistant Resident of Palembang and from the head of the topographical service in Batavia (p. 19). In addition to the attempt to bribe him ('God saved me from this'), he added the information on the Mas Agus group that they had also tried to win their case by removing their opponents from the *raad agama* when the issue was discussed there (p. 28). Unlike Sayyid ʿUthman, Ahmad Khatib had based himself purely on the information given to him by the group of Mas Agus, while Sayyid ʿUthman had obtained his information from all parties involved. As a result of this bias, Ahmad Khatib had reached the wrong conclusion and had rejected Sayyid ʿUthman's book on the issue. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman refuted Ahmad Khatib's point of criticism that he was too rigid and dominant, by pointing out that in an earlier work from 1869 he had approved of a new Friday mosque in Batavia (p. 49).[77]

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75 Ahmad Khatib, *al-Qawl al-tahif*, 39. I thank Sjoerd van Koningsveld for drawing my attention to this manuscript which is kept in Mecca, and His Excellency Waleed A. Elkhereiji, former Ambassador of Saudi Arabia to the Netherlands, for providing me with a copy of it.

76 The names of these scholars are mentioned explicitly and are, in many cases, similar to those I have listed in Chapter Two.

77 See Chapter Three.

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At the end of the book (pp. 91–108) Sayyid ʿUthman also included a number of letters of approval (*taqariz*) of this work, written by a number of local scholars, but also by the wandering Meccan scholar ʿAbd Allah ibn Muhammad Salih al-Zawawi (1850–1924).[78]

The copy of this work, kept in Leiden University Library includes a handwritten copy of a letter by the Meccan *mufti* Muhammad Babasil (in the handwriting of Snouck Hurgronje), dated 2 July 1896, relating to this book. In the letter, the *mufti* explained to Sayyid ʿUthman that he could not give his approval for his book, because he had also received a request from Ahmad Khatib to give his approval to his *Sulh al-jamaʿatayn* and he had responded that he was neither in favour, nor against him.[79]

After the writing of the *Taftih al-muqlatayn*, in October 1895, Sayyid ʿUthman published a shortened Malay version of it for a non-specialist audience under the title *Dafʿ al-waqiʿa wa-l-mayn alladhani fi Sulh al jamaʿatayn*, 'The defence against the encounter and the lies in the *Sulh al jamaʿatayn*' and slightly later, at the end of 1895, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote another Malay work in reaction to Ahmad Khatib, entitled *Tabyin al-khatiʾayn allatayn fi Sulh al-jamaʿatayn*, 'The explanation of the two errors in the *Sulh al-jamaʿatayn.*' According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the two errors of Ahmad Khatib were, firstly, his factual and scholarly mistakes on the issue and, secondly, the fact that he had dealt with Sayyid ʿUthman and his work in a disrespectful manner. Interestingly, at the end of the book two significant documents are attached. The first one is an official decision by the *raad agama* from Batavia stating that in the controversy between Sayyid ʿUthman and Ahmad Khatib, Sayyid ʿUthman's opinion was the correct one. This document is dated 19 January 1896 and is signed by its President, Haji Muhammad Tabarani ibn Haji ʿAbd al-Mughni, and the members of the council. The second is a similar document from the *raad agama* in Meester Cornelis, dated 28 January 1896 and signed by its President, Haji Mujtaba ibn Ahmad, and its members.

The polemic between Sayyid ʿUthman and Ahmad Khatib was, however, not yet ended and in 1897 Ahmad Khatib wrote another book on the issue, *Ithbat al-zayn li-Sulh al-jamaʿatayn bi-jawaz al-jumʿatayn*, 'The affirmation of the beautiful in the *Sulh al-jamaʿatayn bi-jawaz al-jumʿatayn*.' A thousand copies of this work were printed in Mecca at the expense of Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid

78 See Laffan, *Islamic nationhood*, 59–61. Even more letters of approval were included in the second print of the *Taftih al-muqlatayn* from 1896.

79 In the Middle Eastern newspaper *Maʿlumat* 1899 it was incorrectly reported that the *mufti* of Mecca had disapproved of Sayyid ʿUthman's writings on the Palembang mosque, see Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1631.

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and distributed free of charge throughout the Netherlands East Indies.[80] In this work, Ahmad Khatib confirmed the opinions expressed in his earlier work. As one would expect, Sayyid ʿUthman did not leave this book unanswered and, in response, he wrote at least one other piece, called *Khulasat al-qawl al-sadid fi manʿ ihdath taʿaddud al-jumʿa fi l-masjid al-jadid*, 'The summary of the correct word on the prohibition of the adding of another Friday prayer in the new mosque,' published in Arabic in June 1898, followed by a Malay translation in July. From this booklet it appears that Sayyid ʿUthman had also found support for his views from an Egyptian scholar from al-Azhar, by the name of Shaykh Saʿid ibn ʿAli al-Muji al-Misri al-Shafiʿi,[81] and from a scholar from Palembang, Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Shihab al-Din (d. 1901).[82]

All in all, it is clear that a great deal of energy and time was devoted to the new Palembang mosque. Of course, the issue was important because it had much to do with local power relations: if a person wanted to confirm or extend his authority, one of the ways to do this was by establishing a new mosque and if this became the most important mosque in the area this would really boost his power. Moreover, the indigenous people followed the custom of presenting their yearly obligatory donation at the end of Ramadan (*zakat al-fitr*) to the Friday mosque; this meant that control of the Friday mosque also had economic profits.[83] However, the enormous amount of writing on this subject can also be explained by the fact that the issue became a battle between Sayyid ʿUthman and Ahmad Khatib for the supreme authority in religious matters in the Netherlands East Indies. Had Sayyid ʿUthman lost this battle, his position as advisor to the colonial administration or as '*mufti* of the Netherlands East Indies,' as he liked to view himself, would have been weakened substantially. This explains why the issue was so important to Sayyid ʿUthman, but also to Ahmad Khatib, who made an explicit reference to his debate with Sayyid ʿUthman in his autobiography.[84]

In addition to these considerations, the issue also had implications for the Dutch administration. Snouck Hurgronje thought that the integrity of the Islamic Court was at stake here, since the *penghulu* and most members of the *raad agama* were incompetent and, moreover, had been receptive to manipulation by Mas Agus ʿAbd al-Hamid. Snouck Hurgronje was disturbed by this because the *penghulu* and the members of the *raad agama* in Palembang had

80 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 429.

81 Not mentioned in E.I. (2), nor in GAL.

82 Shahabudin, *Otobiografi*, par. 48.

83 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 831.

84 Ahmad Khatib, *al-Qawl al-tahif*, 39–40.

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been officially appointed by the administration and, as such, formed part of the colonial bureaucracy. Consequently, he proposed that the *penghulu* be reprimanded for having provided the administration with erroneous information.[85] From another piece of advice by Snouck Hurgronje, dated 14 December 1895, it is clear that the Dutch considered not paying for the restoration of the Friday mosque in Palembang, given the unclear status of this building as a result of the discussion. However, according to Snouck, this status was clear: this mosque was the old Friday mosque and, therefore, was suitable for restoration at the cost of the government.[86] Finally, Snouck will also have had an interest in the polemics between Sayyid ʿUthman and Ahmad Khatib. He considered Ahmad Khatib to be a conspirator who was hostile towards Dutch rule in the Indies;[87] for this reason, he would not have liked to see Sayyid ʿUthman lose this battle for prestige with Ahmad Khatib.

Finally it should be mentioned that this whole issue also forms a fine example of the cooperation between Snouck and Sayyid ʿUthman. Snouck held the view that his correspondence on the *taʿaddud* issue with the Dutch administration was a joint effort by both Sayyid ʿUthman and himself.[88]

### *The Administration of Islamic Law*

Prior to the 1880s, the Dutch government had not interfered with the Islamic Courts, but in 1882 the colonial administration officially incorporated the *raad agama*, or the '*Priesterraden*', as these Islamic Courts were called, in the judicial system. According to the Royal Decree that organized these courts, they held competence in marriage and inheritance issues and should be established in every Regency that had a Native Court (*landraad*). The *raad agama* was headed by the *penghulu* who was also the advisor to the *landraad* and he received a salary for this. Moreover, the government should appoint three members (*lid*) who did not receive a remuneration for their services. In cases where the verdict of a *raad agama* was not accepted, this could be enforced through the *landraad*, via the so-called '*excecutoir verklaring.*'[89] The officials of the religious courts were notorious for their corruption and the local Dutch administrators dealt carelessly with their appointment.[90]

85 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 828.

86 Ibid., 831–833.

87 Ibid., 1928–1929.

88 Snouck added that he informed Sayyid ʿUthman on the writings in European script, because Sayyid ʿUthman was not able to read those. Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 828.

89 Nurlaelawati, *Modernization, tradition and identity*, 44–50.

90 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 764, 773.

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In his capacity as advisor, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a number of works with the apparent purpose of improving and standardizing the administration of Islamic law in the Netherlands East Indies, which was, of course, of great concern to the authorities. As we have seen in Chapter Three, in 1881 Sayyid ʿUthman had already published a Malay manual for the religious courts and in 1894 Sayyid ʿUthman produced another one, also in Malay. The title of this book is very similar to the earlier one and reads *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya li-ahl al-majalis al-hukmiyya wa-l-ifta'iyya*, 'The book of the Islamic legal rules for the staff of the judicial and advisory councils.' Like the 1881 version, this book deals with the duties and procedures within the judiciary. In addition to this it was also more of a practical tool, to be consulted on specific cases.

The first seven chapters of the book dealt with the sources of Islamic law and the legal methodology that should be used. In these chapters Sayyid ʿUthman explained that the Law (as well as the doctrines of faith) should be based on the consensus (*ijmaʿ*) as this had been developed over the ages among the leading scholars within the Shafiʿi school of Law. Since this standard interpretation had to be followed, the Qur'an and the Hadith could not be exploited individually to reach certain conclusions, but should always be used in the way it had been done in the canonical tradition. This standard interpretation had been laid down in two classical works, the *Tuhfa* by Ibn Hajar, and the *Nihaya* by al-Ramli.[91] In their activities in the courts the judges and the legal advisors (*muftis*) should base themselves on these works (pp. 3–24).

Chapters 8–13 dealt with the functions of judges and *muftis* (pp. 24–65). It is interesting to note that Sayyid ʿUthman explicitly mentioned with regard to the authority of another *fiqh* manual, the *Fath al-muʿin*,[92] that the appointment of a judge by an infidel ruler was valid (p. 25). In another section dealing with the prohibition on appointing an ignorant (*jahil*) or sinful (*fasiq*) person as judge, member of the religious court (*lid*), prayer leader or marriage contractor (*penghulu nikah*), Sayyid ʿUthman expressed his hopes that the standard of the Muslim judiciary would improve through these efforts by the administration:

> We sincerely hope that the just administration (*keadilan*) of the rulers of the state, who already conferred goodness upon the Muslim population by paying a salary to the judges of the religious courts, will optimize this donation by choosing decent persons who understand religion to become judge or member (p. 50).

91 Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 31, 375.

92 This sixteenth-century work was written by al-Malaybari, see Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 375.

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After these more general and introductory chapters, the remainder of the *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya* dealt with matters related to the daily practice of the courts. Interestingly, Sayyid 'Uthman made a distinction between those matters that fell under religious law and those that fell under the laws of the state. In chapter 13, he prescribed that everyone, including the judges, should adhere to the principles of the faith (*imam*), and,

> should distance himself from any type of sin out of fear of punishment in Hell, just as he distances himself from breaking the laws of the state out of fear of a conviction by the state, albeit that the punishment in the Hereafter is much heavier (p. 68).

In line with this restriction of the scope of Islamic law, in the remainder of the *Kitab al-qawanin al-shar'iyya* Sayyid 'Uthman dealt with a limited number of topics.

In chapter 14 Sayyid 'Uthman offered a summary of his *Iqaz al-niyam bi-dhikr ma yata'allaqa bi-ahillat wa-l-siyam*, 'The waking up of the sleeping dealing with the new moons and the fasting.' In this chapter, *penghulus* were ordered to fix the religious calendar by means of *ru'ya* and not by calculation (pp. 69–76).[93] In Chapter 15, he dealt with various types of gifts (pp. 76–81), while chapter 16 elaborated on ownership and property claims after a divorce. Here the indigenous institution of *guna-gini* is mentioned again (pp. 81–84). Chapter 17 dealt with testaments (pp. 84–87). This is the only part of the book dealing with inheritance law, but the reason for this limited attention is undoubtedly that Sayyid 'Uthman had already published a separate manual on this subject, as we have seen in Chapter Three.

Chapters 18–32 dealt with marriage law and covered the usual topics, like marriage contract, ways to dissolve the marriage, the legal consequences thereof, custody of the children and the like. Although these chapters are, for the most part, conventional and do not offer anything new, a number of issues are worth mentioning here. Chapter 19 deals with the concept of *kafa'a*. Sayyid 'Uthman defended this principal fervently in view of his conviction that a daughter of a *sayyid* should never be given in marriage to a non-*sayyid* (pp. 97–101). Chapter 25 covered conditional repudiation (*ta'liq al-talaq*) (pp. 116–125). In the marriage law of large parts of the Netherlands East Indies it was customary for the husband, immediately after the conclusion of a marriage contract, to state that his wife would be repudiated should he not fulfill certain

93 I have a copy of this work at my disposal from 1903 and in Chapter Seven will go into it in more detail.

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specified duties towards her. Sayyid ʿUthman was a dedicated defender of this local custom and he had related on various occasions to Snouck that his teacher ʿAbdallah ibn ʿUmar had also approved of this custom, after he had become acquainted with the situation in Java.[94]

The last chapters of the book (33–40) are 'an elementary manual for the Muslim judges, and more in particular to for the *priesterraden*,' as Snouck Hurgronje phrased this.[95] An important part of the discussion dealt with the validity of written evidence, which Sayyid ʿUthman recognized as something to support the memory. However, if having read this evidence the judge or the witness could not remember it, it was not valid. But, when, for instance, a judge or his deputy sent a letter to confirm the beginning of Ramadan this was seen as valid evidence. In other cases too written evidence was valid; for example, confirming the rights of an orphan (pp. 154–182).

Apparently, Sayyid ʿUthman expected the book to become a bestseller, because on the final page (p. 182) he added a statement about the book being registered with the Department of Justice and that, according to *Staatsblad* 1881, number 199, reprints were not allowed. Its publication was also announced in the Dutch colonial press, apparently with the view of reaching a European public.[96] Certainly, the book enjoyed great popularity. In colonial circles the book became widely known following a positive review in 1894 by Snouck Hurgronje under the title '*Sajjid Oethman's gids voor de priesterraden*' (Sayyid ʿUthman's guide for the religious courts') in the journal *Het Recht in Nederlandsch-Indië*. From time to time, it was used in court cases in the colonial period, e.g. in Bogor and in Palembang. In 1958, the same work was also officially designated by the Ministry of Religious Affairs as one of the thirteen *fiqh* texts that the Islamic Courts could use as a work of reference.[97] Today the book is still available in modern reprints.

Sayyid ʿUthman also addressed the emergent religious bureaucracy on other occasions. In a very short and very basic Malay pamphlet he tackles the issue of the appointment of chief religious functionaries (*kepala agama*), a term that here indicates the *penghulu*, to be the chairman or judge of the religious court. The brochure is entitled *Misbah al-zulam*, 'The lamp in the dark,' and was published on 12 Jumada al-awwal 1321. Notably, the European date, 5 August 1903, is also given, which is hardly ever done and this indicates Sayyid ʿUthman's closeness to the colonial bureaucracy in addressing this issue.

94 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Sajjid Oethman's gids,' 300.

95 Ibid., 301.

96 See e.g. *Algemeen Handelsblad*, 'Verspreide Indische berichten,' 18 May 1895.

97 Nurlaelawati, *Modernization, tradition and identity*, 45, 53, 139–140.

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Sayyid ʻUthman wrote the brochure after the natives (*anak negeri*) had complained to him about the appointment of incompetent religious leaders. The booklet started by mentioning the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of the faith, and continued to distinguish between four types of Muslims: the pure (*sempurna*), the sinner (*fasik*), the hypocrite (*munafiq*) and the apostate (*murtadd*). Of these four types, only the pure Muslim could become a religious functionary (pp. 2–7). In the last section, Sayyid ʻUthman mentioned why this was so important. Apart from the fact that only a pure Muslim was permitted to perform legal duties, such as being a witness, he also went into specific local circumstances. The government (*keadilan*) had granted this institution of religious functionaries to the people and paid for their salaries. On appointment, the functionaries were made to swear an oath in the hope that they would perform their duties in the interest of the people. It was important that the *kepala agama* was a pure Muslim, because a non-pure official was vulnerable to corruption and enriching himself at the cost of the people. Such a person could do whatever he liked, for he had no superior above him, because the government did not interfere in religious matters and he did not fear God. Very often the native population did not open their mouths, out of fear that the *kepala agama* would give them an even harder time. However, one way the people could improve their situation was to direct themselves to the government with the request to appoint a pure Muslim in the position, for 'he will not neglect his oath, because he fears God' (pp. 7–9).

Thus, we see that also in the case of the administration of Islamic law, Sayyid ʻUthman was very supportive in introducing and promoting Dutch policies.

### *Dress*

An interesting example of difference of opinion between Sayyid ʻUthman and Snouck during their partnership had to do with dress.[98] In a small brochure, published in 1904, Sayyid ʻUthman gave an interesting description of the dress conventions of three different ethnic groups in the Netherlands East Indies. On the title page it read: *Ini buku kecil buat menyatakan pertegahan hukum adat negeri yang bersamaan pada pertegahan hukum agama Islam atas orang yang menukar pakaian bangsanya dengan memakai pakaian lain bangsanya adanya*, 'This is a small book to explain that people are forbidden in customary law and Islamic law from changing the dress of their own ethnic group for that of another.' This booklet includes a nice passage that illustrated the different

98 I have dealt with this issue around the year 1900 in Kaptein, 'Southeast Asian debates.' For a historical overview see, Van Dijk, 'Sarongs, jubbahs, and trousers.'

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types of dress worn by various ethnic groups in the Netherlands East Indies. The sixth section of the brochure reads as follows:

> It is well known that the dress of Europeans consists of a jacket for the body and a hat or a black cap. Arab dress consists of a *jubbah* (long, open gown) or a vest together with a shirt for the body, and for the head a turban, unless one remains inside the house, in which case only a small white cap is worn. Dress for the Malays or the Javanese is a shirt, called *kebaya*, to cover the body, and the head cloth (*setangan*) for the head (p. 6).

It is clear that Sayyid ʿUthman took the view that each of the three ethnic groups – the Europeans, the Arabs, and the natives – had their specific type of dress and should stick to it. He was, therefore, completely in agreement with the dominant colonial policy on dress at the time, which, in line with the classification of the population into three main ethnic groups – the Europeans, the Foreign Orientals (the Arabs and the Chinese) and the natives – prescribed different dress codes for each group, with the Chinese even being obliged to wear a pigtail. Contrary to these ideas, Snouck Hurgronje thought that these dress prescriptions evoked anti-colonial sentiments among the population and, for example, was against the prohibition of indigenous civil servants wearing European clothes. Contrary to the view upheld by many Dutch people, Snouck thought that this did not affect the hierarchical relationship between Dutch civil servants and their indigenous staff members.[99] Thus, the dress issue forms an interesting example of how, during their partnership, Sayyid ʿUthman was not always on the same line as Snouck Hurgronje.

### *Local Politics*

During his partnership with Snouck, Sayyid ʿUthman was also active in local politics. For instance, together they interfered in the appointment of a new head of the Arab community, the so-called Captain of the Arabs (*kapten Arab*) in Batavia in 1901. Despite enormous support for Balwael as a candidate, Snouck and Sayyid ʿUthman pushed ʿUmar al-Manqush.[100]

99 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1326–7; 1041–5.

100 *Nieuws van den Dag van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 6 April 1901, where he is called Mangoes. He was a non-*sayyid* born in Hadramaut and had become a wealthy trader in Java. He held the position of *kapten Arab* in Batavia from 1902–1931, see Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami awakening*, 27–28.

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In 1905, Sayyid ʿUthman briefly became a member of the municipal council of Batavia. On 27 March 1905, Sayyid ʿUthman was appointed as a native member, but he had resigned by 27 July 1905. In between these dates the *Nieuws van den Dag van Nederlandsch-Indië* mentioned that he had not attended the council meetings on 25 May and 7 June. It is certainly hard to imagine how Sayyid ʿUthman could have functioned within the council, since he could not read Western script and we do not know whether his Dutch was sufficient to participate in the deliberations. Most probably, he accepted the position under pressure from Snouck, who was concerned that the seat on the council for the native member would remain empty, or would be occupied by someone with whom he was less familiar.

## 9 Conclusion

This chapter showed that Sayyid ʿUthman had become the object of debate in government circles in connection to the disturbances in West Java, which were related to the mystical brotherhoods. In spite of the prevalent Arabophobia in government circles and thanks to positive evaluations of him by Holle and Van den Berg, his name was cleared in a statement of the Council of the Indies in May 1886, and this paved the way for his future role within the colonial administration. When Snouck Hurgronje arrived in the Dutch East Indies in 1889 to guide Islamic policies in the colony, he immediately recruited Sayyid ʿUthman as his partner. Sayyid ʿUthman received a salary for this and thus entered the service of the colonial administration. Sayyid ʿUthman had gained the full trust of Snouck due to his correspondence with him and the writings he had sent to Snouck. The cooperation with Snouck went well and in 1891 Sayyid ʿUthman was officially appointed as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs.

In this official position, he contributed to many issues relevant to controlling the Muslim population in the Netherlands East Indies; due to his religious authority, Sayyid ʿUthman had significant influence within the Muslim population, and through his writings he helped to contain them. It is worth noting that the government was aware of this effect and sometimes subsidized certain publications. Examples of issues in which Sayyid ʿUthman and Snouck cooperated closely were the obstructing of the possible influence of the *wasiat* and the *taʿaddud* issue in Palembang. In addition to this trouble shooting role, Sayyid ʿUthman also contributed to the development of the Muslim judiciary, as is shown by his manual for the Islamic Courts.

To conclude this chapter, it is important to note that in the period discussed here, in addition to the activities that were of direct relevance to government

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policies, Sayyid ʿUthman also remained active as a religious preacher and writer. These activities will be dealt with in Chapter Seven. In the next chapter I will deal with the criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman, which started to become more apparent after he entered the service of the government.

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CHAPTER 5

# Sayyid ʻUthman and the Pan-Islamist Lobby (1895–1900)

## 1 Introduction

The more Sayyid ʻUthman rose to prominence, the more criticism he provoked. This criticism focussed on his involvement in the Dutch colonial administration and became stronger with the increase of the influence of Pan-Islamism in the Netherlands East Indies. This ideology developed from the second half of the nineteenth century in the Ottoman Empire and aimed to overcome the general administrative and socio-economical impasse in this empire. It had an interior and a foreign dimension and in this latter capacity, Pan-Islamism claimed to unify all Muslims under the leadership of the Ottoman ʻCaliph' and thus the Ottomans opposed the Western colonial presence in the Muslim world.[1]

This international dimension of Pan-Islamism was, of course, also relevant to the Muslims in the Netherlands East Indies. The Dutch government, which naturally rejected any challenge to its authority, saw this ideology as a threat and, consequently, its policies were strongly informed by a fear of this Pan-Islamist ideology. Snouck Hurgronje held the opinion that more sophisticated Muslims did not feel attracted to this ideology at all and he was very negative about Pan-Islamism, stating that, 'among the stupid multitude that may still be tempted by the idea of war against all *kafirs*, it can stir up only confusion and unrest.'[2]

Due to this anti-colonial ideology, the Dutch did not have a good reputation in the Middle Eastern press. In general, the colonial administration in the Netherlands East Indies was depicted as suppressing the people of Aceh in an unjust war, exploiting the indigenous population in general, and giving the Arabs in particular a hard time with the pass and quarter system. In the context of this negative discourse on the Dutch colonial presence in Southeast Asia and as a close ally of the Dutch government, Sayyid ʻUthman was also to become an object of attacks.

1 Schmidt, 'Pan-Islamism,' 49–51.

2 Snouck Hurgronje, 'The Holy War,' 266.

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This chapter deals with this Pan-Islamist inspired criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman, which started roughly from 1895 and, having reached its peak around 1898, appeared to have calmed down after 1900. In the title of this chapter I have included these rough dates and, as I have indicated in the introduction to this book, this episode in Sayyid ʿUthman's life fell within the period dealt with in the previous chapter. However, it is dealt with separately here because of the importance of the topic.

## 2 Becoming a Target for Criticism

In March 1892, Sayyid ʿUthman had written a small booklet on the issue of anonymous letters and this seems to indicate that he had become the object of criticism. The booklet does not go into detail about these opponents and their objections, but in view of the fact that it is written in Malay and thus Sayyid ʿUthman is addressing a native audience, we can assume that this criticism originated from within native circles or perhaps from the Arab population who were not very fluent in Arabic. This booklet is entitled *Hukm al-ʿAlim al-Ghalib fi majhul al-mursil wa-l-katib*, 'The judgement of the Omniscient and Victorious God on anonymous senders and writers.' In the booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman makes a distinction between anonymous letters (*surat kaling*) that serve a just purpose and those that contained slander and were offensive. The writers of anonymous letters of this second type were great sinners and the Omniscient God would judge them accordingly on the Last Day (pp. 2–15).

Some years later, a number of anonymous attacks on Sayyid ʿUthman appeared in the Middle Eastern press. The reason for such attacks was Sayyid ʿUthman's great concern for the Arab population in Batavia and beyond; throughout his life, he had believed that the Arabs should form an example to the native population by leading a pious life according to the Shariʿa, and occasionally he undertook action to promote this idea. An interesting example of this was mentioned in the Dutch colonial newspaper the *Locomotief* of 14 March 1890, which reported that Sayyid ʿUthman had put up posters containing moral lessons in mosques that were frequented by Arabs. These moral lessons included warnings against drinking alcohol, for instance, but also an admonition to be honest in trade.[3]

This may well have annoyed some members of the Arab community in Batavia, but when Sayyid ʿUthman published a small Arabic booklet in February 1894 it provoked heated debates between him and a number of Arabs. This

3 See Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 31, dated March 1890.

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booklet was entitled *Nasihat al-shafiq li-kulli akh wa-rafiq*, 'The advice of the friend to all brothers and comrades.' It dealt specifically with an issue that Sayyid ʿUthman had already addressed earlier in his career in bigger works, notably in *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya* from 1880. This was the issue of dishonestly appropriating the property of Europeans and Chinese.[4] However, in his earlier dealings with the topic he had formulated his ideas in general terms; in this brochure he linked the practice specifically to the Arabs:

> An issue that often occurs among vile Arabs in this region is that they declare the taking of the property of the Europeans, the Chinese and others permitted, although they belong to the People of the Covenant (*ahl al-aman*).[5] And that through deception, machinations by pretending bankruptcy or the running off with their property (pp. 3–4).

He thought that the Arabs, who practiced this, severely damaged the reputation of their ethnic group in the Netherlands East Indies. And he further explained that, according to the Shariʿa, there should be no difference between the property of the Muslims and of the People of the Covenant, and that it was forbidden to take their property. He ended his brochure with the wish,

> that the good care of the Dutch state and her longstanding protection of its people be given to the best of us selectively and that she makes a distinction in this towards the evildoers of our race, so that the misfortune of their deeds and the consequences of their meanness will not hit us (p. 13).

The *Nasihat al-shafiq* was also noted and summarized in the Dutch colonial press.[6]

This pamphlet formed a fierce assault on the Arabs and, although Sayyid ʿUthman had attacked them on earlier occasions, this time the attacks were not restricted to the immediate Arab circles, but also became known in society at large. It was no surprise, therefore, that this brochure became a motive for

4 See Chapter Three and also his 1897 *Bunnat al-jalis*, 11–31.

5 This is a technical term from *fiqh* meaning that non-Muslims have a protected status in Muslim territory, see EI (2), s.v. *aman*.

6 'Vermaning van den Welgenegene,' see *Nieuws van de Dag van Nederlandsch-Indië* 17 April 1894 (taken from the *Locomotief*). Perhaps this anonymous article on Sayyid ʿUthman, like some others mentioned above, also originated from the pen of Snouck.

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the deep hatred that these Arabs developed towards Sayyid ʿUthman.[7] Consequently, a number of Arabs started to attack him, not directly, but by means of anonymous articles in the Middle Eastern press, like the Cairene newspaper *al-Muʾayyad*. In line with the wider Middle Eastern press, this newspaper had a negative understanding of the Dutch colonial administration, stressing its exploitative and anti-Islamic character and Sayyid ʿUthman also became a target for criticism in these negative articles. An example of this is an article in *al-Muʾayyad* from 12 February 1896, in which Sayyid ʿUthman was criticized for having written the *Nasihat al-shafiq*, as well as for his positive attitude towards the Dutch. This attack was anonymous, but it is probable that an Arab named Sayyid Husayn al-ʿAttas from Batavia was behind it.[8]

A small booklet, which should also be placed in the framework of Sayyid ʿUthman's criticism of the Arabs, dates from June 1895. It is in Arabic – which shows that it was directed at the Arabs – and bears the telling title *Taghrid qumri al-hamaʾim fi l-hathth ʿala libas al-ʿamaʾim*, 'The song of the turtledove to urge the wearing of the turban.' In it the virtues of the turban, 'the crown of the Arabs,' were explained and it is evident that Sayyid ʿUthman is addressing those Arabs who had abandoned this headgear and other items of typical Arab dress. In the brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman uses a bizarre argument to prove the superiority of the turban: as mentioned before, around 1864 he had witnessed a masquerade at a European party where people wore all sorts of dress from all over the world. All those present agreed that the Arab attire, including the turban, was the most beautiful and most respectable (pp. 7–8). Although the implicit attack on the Arabs was not as serious as it had been in *Nasihat al-shafiq*, we can assume that this brochure strengthened the Arab criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman.

## 3 The Prayer for Queen Wilhelmina and the Reactions to It[9]

When Sayyid ʿUthman was already under attack in the Middle Eastern press, a series of events occurred that stirred up a lot of negative reactions to his behaviour. This affair was connected to the coronation of the Dutch Princess Wilhelmina as Queen of the Kingdom of the Netherlands on 6 September 1898 in Amsterdam. As a matter of course, this event was also celebrated in the colonies and during the preparations for the upcoming festivities, in a meeting of

7 Hoogenstraaten, 'Letters to De Goeje', 9 May 1898.

8 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1532.

9 This issue is dealt with in more detail in Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen.'

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the Council of the Indies on 22 October 1897, the question had arisen of whether a prayer (*duʿa'*) for the Queen could be uttered in the mosques on behalf of her Muslim subjects, to mark the occasion. Snouck Hurgronje had been consulted on the matter and had advised against this, because he thought that the government should not interfere and that the religious leaders themselves should take the initiative on this matter. Moreover, Snouck had his doubts about the use of such a prayer, because it would be said in Arabic and the majority of the people were not able to understand this language.[10]

The idea to involve Sayyid ʿUthman in this matter came from his old friend Dr. Hoogenstraaten. When proposing that Sayyid ʿUthman create a *duʿa'* for the occasion of the coronation of the Queen, Dr. Hoogenstraaten perhaps hinted that he would be able to organise a royal decoration for him as a reward for composing such a prayer. Subsequently, Dr. Hoogenstraaten won the support of the Resident of Batavia, H. de Kock, for this idea. The latter, in turn, asked Sayyid ʿUthman to compose an appropriate prayer, which he did.[11] Sayyid ʿUthman also took it upon himself to distribute the prayer throughout Java, accompanied by a brief introduction explaining its meaning.[12]

Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer for Queen Wilhelmina was read in the mosques after the communal Friday prayer on 2 September 1898, not only in Batavia but throughout the entire island of Java. Sayyid ʿUthman himself read the *duʿa'* in the mosque of Pekojan, the Arab quarter of Batavia, in Arabic, whereupon it was translated into Malay by the Chief *Penghulu*, Haji Muhammad Tabarani.[13] The text of the prayer has been preserved and I translate this text as follows:

> O God, O Kind of the Kindly Ones, O Treasure of the weak, O King of Earth and Heaven. You know what is visible from us, and what is hidden. O God, likewise You are kind to us in the regions of this kingdom, where no one opposes us [in the practice of] our religion, in our prayers, our almsgiving, our fasting, our way of life, and our marriages. You Yourself have bestowed kindness on us, granting safety for our souls, our relatives, and our possessions, and You have made it easy for us to attain the means of our livelihood. You Yourself have granted us the mediator and the reason for these blessings, because You have ordered that the Dutch government keeps the country safe and just, taking into consideration the prescriptions of our religion, like the investiture of our judges, the care of

10 'Advice Council of the Indies, 22 October 1897.' See also Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1653.

11 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1649, 1653–1654.

12 *Java-Bode*, 3 September 1898; *Insulinde*, 20 September 1898, 322.

13 *Java-Bode*, 3 September 1898.

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> their subsistence, the repairing of our mosques, and it does not oppose anything to do with our religious matters. You know that best from us. We therefore beseech You, O God, an abundance of blessings of kind acts from You towards us. O God, likewise You have ordered and You have granted these blessings through this reign. We ask You, O God, a reward for the beneficence just mentioned. May You grant well-being to the new, august Queen (Arab. *al-malika al-jadida al-ʿaziza*), and may You grant her a long life, endowed with bodily health, and [may You grant] her subjects earthly gains, and the hidden things of the earth from the mines and the plantations. May You make her reign glorious for those who fall under her protection in perfect justice, and [may You grant her] the beauty of being marked as a one of Your beloved, O Giver of Guidance, so that the star of her kingdom will rise brightly among the people, and grant her subjects prosperity in abundance and without fail, and [make prosperous] whosoever falls under her protection with the goodness of all things and the perpetuity of these blessings for our well-being for ever. Amen.[14]

Initial reactions to this prayer appeared in a number of reports in Dutch colonial newspapers. The *Java-Bode* of 3 September reported that, on the afternoon of 2 September, Sayyid ʿUthman received telegrams from all the Regents of Java and Madura thanking him for having sent them the text, and to assure him that his *duʿa'* had been read in all parts of the regions under their jurisdiction, where it had been listened to with great sympathy. Another positive reaction to Sayyid ʿUthman's *duʿa'* is testified to in a telegram of congratulation, which the head of the Arabs in Batavia, Sayyid ʿUmar ibn Hasan ibn Ahmad Aydid, had sent to the Queen. This telegram was published in the press and, on behalf of the Arabs of Batavia, it expressed loyalty to the Queen and mentioned that they had uttered the prayer of Sayyid ʿUthman, '[...] united with all Musulmans of the entire Netherlands Indies.'[15]

Alongside these positive reactions, however, were also critical noises. The first of these was mentioned in a report in the daily newspaper the *Locomotief* on 8 September 1898. This report runs as follows:

> A few days ago two Arabs who were apparently hostile to our authority – probably persons who are not unfamiliar with the reports in the Turkish periodicals which breathe that spirit – made loudly known in public

14 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 65. See for the Arabic text, Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen,' 177.

15 *Insulinde*, 18 October 1898, 354.

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> their disapproval of the prayer that Sayyid ʿUthman had composed for our Queen. On hearing this, one of their religious leaders berated them in strong terms, but he had to pay for this by suffering a beating at their hands. A charge which was lodged against them for this reason has resulted in the sentence of twenty days of forced labour (Dutch *krakal-straf*) for both.

Although the criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer was apparently limited, he felt it necessary to defend his action in an Arabic *fatwa*, which he published on 24 September 1898. The *fatwa* counts six pages and has the following heading: *Mas'ila fi l-duʿa' li-ghayri l-Muslim wa-huwa wali al-amr fi l-buldan allati fi-ha al-Muslimuna*, 'Question about the *duʿa'* for a non-Muslim who holds power in a land where Muslims live.' In the *fatwa*, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned seven arguments to demonstrate that he was justified in producing this prayer. Most of these arguments are rather general, but number five is worth mentioning here in more detail.[16] In the pertinent section, Sayyid ʿUthman deals with the criticism that he had showed too much 'amicable behaviour' (*mudara*) towards the Dutch in his prayer. Reacting against this, Sayyid ʿUthman went into the concept of *mudara*. Because this is a central notion to understanding Sayyid ʿUthman's attitude towards the colonial Dutch ruler, I translate this passage in full:

> Friendliness (*mudara*) towards the people belongs to what is permitted in the Law; it is also a required matter in the Law because of the Prophet's saying, which al-Qastallani[17] has transmitted on the authority of Abu Hurayra,[18] 'the summit of reason after the belief in God is friendliness towards the people,' and al-Turtushi[19] has added to this in his *Siraj al-muluk*, 'The lamps of the kings': 'I have ordered friendliness towards the people, in the same manner as I have ordered the observance of obligations.' And the meaning of friendliness is the consideration of the people with the well-being of religion, in contrast with flattery (*mudahana*), for considering this is the ruination of religion (p. 2).

16 See for a complete rendering of the other arguments, Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen,' 165–168.

17 Lived from 1448–1517. Specialist in Hadith, see E.I. (2), s.v.

18 Companion of the Prophet, see E.I. (2), s.v. died in 678 or 679.

19 Lived from 1059–1126 and wrote the mirror of princes, mentioned here. See E.I. (2), s.v.

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After having made his arguments, Sayyid ʿUthman concluded that the *duʿa'* was legally permitted, because this *duʿa'* was intended as a means of safeguarding the life, possessions, and religion of the Muslims. The lawfulness of the *duʿa'* was further strengthened by quoting from the *Tuhfa* of Ibn Hajar, who mentioned that the omission of the *duʿa'* would lead to anarchy (*fitna*). Indeed, for this reason, a number of other scholars had declared the *duʿa'* for the ruler recommendable (*sunna*). In a final passage, Sayyid ʿUthman stated that now he had written this defence, his opponents could no longer deny the lawfulness and the value of this *duʿa'*. Notably, he described these opponents as 'persons who should not interfere in the administration of religious matters, jealous liars, and correspondents who send newspaper editors evil rumours and forged information' (p. 6).

In addition to his own defence, Sayyid ʿUthman also received the full support of a certain Salim al-Mihdar from Habban in Hadramaut in an untitled Arabic brochure, dated 27 February 1899. This man had heard from travellers about the prayer and the subsequent attacks by a number of *sayyids* on Sayyid ʿUthman. After he had received a copy of the prayer from someone from Batavia, he wrote a six-page defence of Sayyid ʿUthman. In this defence, he scrutinized the prayer and concluded that it did not contain anything that was against the Law. Moreover, he added that one should be careful of criticizing someone who respects unbelievers, because he might have good reasons for this, such as a fear of being harmed or the hope that the unbelievers might garner sympathy for Muslims, as 'friendliness (*mudara*) is a fine strategy that brings benefits and wards off harm' (p. 3). This attitude is justified by, amongst others, quotations from the *Fath al-muʿin*. In addition to this, Salim noted that, at that time, the power of the Christians was great, for they controlled most countries of Islam from East to West. Nevertheless, nobody should omit the prayer for the well-being of the government in his sermons, even if the ruler was a Christian. Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer was by no means a recognition of Christian superiority, but rather an attempt to gain their sympathy for the ultimate benefit of Muslims.[20]

## 4 A Royal Decoration

Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer also evoked interesting reactions among the Dutch. On 20 September 1898, M.J. de Goeje, wrote a letter to the Minister of the Colonies, J.T. Cremer (1847–1923), in which he proposed that Sayyid ʿUthman be

20 Most likely, Salim wrote this at the request of Sayyid ʿUthman himself.

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awarded a royal decoration for having composed the *duʿa'*. De Goeje appended a Dutch translation of the prayer, which he had published in the Dutch newspaper the *Haarlemsch Dagblad*.[21] It is not clear to me whether De Goeje was acting here on his own behalf or whether someone else had asked for him to intervene. Perhaps the ultimate source for the idea was Dr. Hoogenstraten who, as we have seen, may have raised the idea in Batavia and may also have asked someone to involve De Goeje in the Netherlands. Hoogenstraaten had already been in contact with De Goeje to ask for his assistance in stopping the smear campaigns against Sayyid ʿUthman in the Ottoman newspaper *al-Maʿlumat*, but in this letter no mention was made of a decoration.[22]

We do not have details on this initial attempt to award a decoration to Sayyid ʿUthman, but it is clear that it was not immediately successful, since on 8 February 1899 Hoogenstraaten approached De Goeje with the same request. In this letter he mentioned the great merits of Sayyid ʿUthman and his service to the Dutch administration and he brought up the idea that Sayyid ʿUthman deserved a royal decoration as a result. Hoogenstraaten went on to report that this idea had been rejected by Snouck, who had earlier advised the Minister against such action, and that this had caused a breach in the friendship between Snouck and Sayyid ʿUthman. In the February 1899 letter Hoogenstraaten asked De Goeje to lobby the Minister for the decoration.[23] Snouck Hurgronje was also against this second attempt, because he felt that native administrators might be jealous and, in an advice to the Governor General of March 1899, he proposed a compromise – a lower decoration for Sayyid ʿUthman. This will almost certainly have weakened the partnership between him and Sayyid ʿUthman further.[24] Continuing his campaign, on 12 August 1899 Hoogenstraaten sent yet another letter on behalf of his friend Sayyid ʿUthman, 'with his polite regards,' together with the afore mentioned brochure by Salim al-Mihdar written in defence of Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer.[25] This brochure gained some recognition in the Netherlands following De Goeje's publication of a Dutch translation of the text in the cultural journal *De Gids* in 1899. In the accompanying note, De Goeje expressed the hope that this publication would counterbalance the fierce attacks on Sayyid ʿUthman in *al-Maʿlumat* and that it would show that 'also in this case [...] from an anthoritative perspective a conciliatory

21 De Goeje, 'Letter to Minister of the Colonies, 20 September 1898.'

22 Hoogenstraaten, 'Letters to De Goeje,' 9 May 1898.

23 Ibid., 8 February 1899.

24 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1514–1516.

25 Hoogenstraaten, 'Letters to De Goeje,' 12 August 1899.

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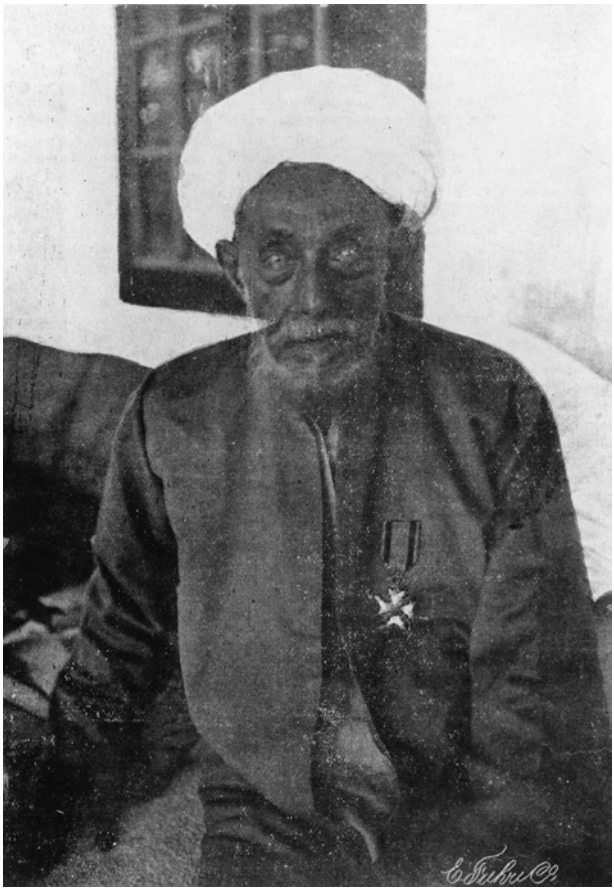

FIGURE 7 *Sayyid ʿUthman with his royal decoration pinned to his gown*
SOURCE: *WEEKBLAD VOOR INDIË* 10, NO. 47 (8 MAART 1914): 1124

attitude from the authorities towards the unbelievers is recommended.'[26] It is clear that this translation also served the purpose of justifying the granting of the royal decoration to Sayyid ʿUthman.

Eventually, in spite of Snouck's objections, on 31 August 1899 Sayyid ʿUthman was appointed a member of the 'Order of the Dutch Lion' (*Orde van de Nederlandsche Leeuw*). The actual order, a cross, was presented to Sayyid ʿUthman on 5 December 1899 without any of the usual pomp and circumstance, because they did not want to expose Sayyid ʿUthman publicly as a friend of the

26 De Goeje, 'Iets over den modus vivendi.'

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unbelievers and thus provoke his opponents.[27] In a letter of 10 September 1899, Hoogenstraaten expressed his gratitude to De Goeje for his support in this matter. He mentioned that Snouck, who was in Benkulen at the time of the granting of the decoration, had also congratulated Sayyid ʿUthman by telegram and that this had ended the animosity between the two men. Appended to this letter, was a personal letter from Sayyid ʿUthman in Arabic, dated 12 September 1899, addressed to De Goeje, thanking him for his help.[28] Presumably amongst many others, the linguist Ph.S. van Ronkel visited Sayyid ʿUthman to congratulate him.[29]

This royal decoration was a memorable event and Sayyid ʿUthman regarded it as a highlight of his career. In fact, the only official photograph ever taken of Sayyid ʿUthman shows him with his decoration pinned to his gown.[30] As we have seen, the *Qamar al-zaman* also mentions the granting of the decoration (stanza 180). On the other hand, this decoration would compound the already negative press that Sayyid ʿUthman was getting in the Middle East, as we will see shortly.

## 5 Sayyid ʿUthman under Attack

As was reported in the above mentioned article from the *Locomotief*, a specific group of Arabs had disapproved of the prayer and, moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman was already under attack in the Middle Eastern press, especially after he had made himself unpopular among certain sectors of the Arabs population following his 1894 brochure *Nasihat al-shafiq*. Until this point, however, no one had dared challenge his authority too openly. This situation changed when a new Ottoman consul arrived in Batavia. This consul, by the name of Kamil Bey, served in Batavia from November 1897 to December 1898 and was an enthusiastic agent of Pan-Islamism. As a result of his open anti-Dutch stance, the Arabs who had been opposing Sayyid ʿUthman in the Middle Eastern press anonymously, now dared to become more open in their attacks.[31]

27 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1517–1519; 1639.

28 Hoogenstraaten, 'Letters to De Goeje,' 10 September 1899.

29 See Van Ronkel, 'Letters to De Goeje,' 5 September 1899. He used Sayyid ʿUthman as a linguistic informant, see Van Ronkel, 'Arabische meervoudsvormen,' and practiced his spoken Arabic with him, see Van Ronkel, 'Letters to De Goeje,' 1 November 1904.

30 This photograph was probably taken later in his life, see Chapter Eight.

31 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1517, 1543.

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The presence of this young, hot-headed Ottoman consul created a stressful situation for Sayyid ʿUthman. As a general policy, Kamil Bey tried to provoke anti-Dutch feelings among the Muslims by seeking support for his views from the Arabs in Batavia. At the beginning of 1898, he had tried to establish a religious school in Batavia, apparently to spread Pan-Islamist ideology, but this move had been frustrated by Sayyid ʿUthman who informed the Governor General of Kamil Bey's intentions via Snouck Hurgronje.[32] Pointedly, Kamil Bey did not attend the coronation celebrations in Batavia in September 1898, deliberately defying the Dutch government. The situation worsened in February 1899 when he arranged for the sending of a small group of Javanese Arab schoolboys to Istanbul, at the expense of the Ottoman treasury, to support his Pan-Islamist claims.[33] Shortly after, Sayyid ʿUthman convened a meeting in his home with 35 Arabs at which it was decided to establish an Arab school with Sayyid ʿUthman as its teacher. The aim was to offer schooling that would obstruct the sending of boys from the Netherlands East Indies to Istanbul. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, these boys returned from Istanbul 'with their empty heads decorated with a beautiful fez and hostile towards our administration.'[34] Many Arabs, however, regarded Sayyid ʿUthman's idea to establish his own school as being motivated exclusively by colonial politics and, consequently, a significant number turned away from him.[35] As a result of these activities of Sayyid ʿUthman, Kamil Bey developed a distrust of him and this feeling was encouraged by his enemies from within the Arab community. Indeed, ultimately Kamil Bey regarded Sayyid ʿUthman as his enemy. In this frame of mind, Kamil Bey made Sayyid ʿUthman one of the main targets of his anti-Dutch propaganda and added to the on-going smear campaign against Sayyid ʿUthman in the Pan-Islamist press, depicting him as an agent of the infidel government.[36]

A Middle Eastern journal, which I have subjected to systematic research, is the famous Cairo-based journal *al-Manar*, the most important mouthpiece of the nascent reformist movement, which will be central to the next chapter. Under the editorship of the well-known Rashid Rida this journal appeared from 1898 to 1935 and was read by Muslims throughout the world. *Al-Manar*

32 Ibid., 1532.

33 Schmidt, 'Pan-Islamism,' 87, 91–102.

34 *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* 10 June 1899. The fez was the typical headgear of the Pan-Islamist oriented Muslims; Sayyid ʿUthman was disgusted by it and thought that Arabs should wear the turban, as previously mentioned.

35 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1619–1620.

36 Ibid., 1630–1637.

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was also read in the Netherlands East Indies and in this part of the world an interesting dialogue between the journal and various readers evolved. Given the fact that *al-Manar* was in Arabic, it is understandable that the Southeast Asian participants in this dialogue were either indigenous people from the region who knew Arabic due to their studies in the Middle East, or members of the Hadrami diaspora who were living in Southeast Asia.[37]

The journal contains extensive passages about Sayyid ʿUthman. These passages were completely in line with reports from this period in other Middle Eastern media, to which they sometimes referred. The first time Sayyid ʿUthman's name appeared in *al-Manar* is in an article from the end of December 1899.[38] This article discussed the situation in Aceh on the basis of a report from an anonymous source in Singapore. It made mention of the vicious Dutch claims about Aceh and the concerns from the Ottoman Empire about this, because it considered Aceh to fall under its protection. In the same article there was a complaint about 'a certain man by the name of al-Sayyid ʿUthman ibn ʿAqil' who, it was rumoured, the Dutch government had hired in order to assist them in lowering the position of the Muslims.

The next issue of *al-Manar*, on 6 January 1900, continued with a report on the Dutch colonial policy towards the indigenous population in the Dutch East Indies by quoting a lengthy letter from 'Jawa,' dated 28 November 1899. According to this report, the Dutch government was deliberately keeping the indigenous population uneducated so that it could be better controlled. The position of the Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies was described and it was mentioned that they were forced to live in specially designated town quarters and that they were not free to travel. Up until this point, the Dutch government had never been receptive towards objections against this policy. Among the individuals who supported the government's stance, special mention was made of Sayyid ʿUthman who was described as harming the members of his own race, 'of whom three *sayyids* were imprisoned last year.'[39] According to the same report, in October 1899 Sayyid ʿUthman had invited a number of important *sayyids* to his residence in Batavia for a meeting. At this gathering, Sayyid ʿUthman had stressed that he and his visitors were aiming for a common cause and that he intended to remove any obstructions to their well-being. When the visitors did not believe him, Sayyid ʿUthman started to insult them in a

37 Bluhm, 'Preliminary statement.' Bluhm-Warn, '*Al-Manar* and Ahmad Soorkattie.' Abaza, 'Southeast Asia and the Middle East.' Burhanudin, 'Aspring for Islamic reform.'

38 *al-Manar* Vol. 2:42 (30 December 1899): 670–671.

39 This might be an echo of the conviction of the two Arabs who had attacked someone who had defended Sayyid ʿUthman's prayer for the Queen, see above, p. 146.

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revolting way, whereupon they left, reciting the Qur'anic verse: 'Our Lord, do not make dissension in our hearts after You have guided us' (Qur'an 3: 8). After having reported this incident, the article continued to relate how cruelly some Arabs had been treated by the Resident of Bandung in November 1899, after they had refused to pay their respects to him in the traditional way.[40] It also stated that the population of the Netherlands East Indies was obliged to perform forced labour for the state authorities.[41] At the end of the article, it was announced that a future issue of *al-Manar* would present a separate portrait of Sayyid 'Uthman, with particular attention to his close relations to the Dutch administration and the decoration that the government had awarded him.[42] Moreover, in a personal comment, Rashid Rida expressed his amazement at this Dutch injustice and ended as follows:

> We are utterly amazed about what has been written to us at various times by more than one person about 'Uthman ibn 'Aqil, because we know the 'Aqil family as a pure and noble family. How, then, is it possible that 'Uthman forms an exception to this? Isn't he one of those to whom Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Aqil from Singapore belongs?[43]

The rumours about Sayyid 'Uthman continued in subsequent issues, as evidenced by the issue of 20 January 1900, in which a report 'From Batavia, from a virtuous person' was included. The report was a confirmation of the Dutch oppression of the Arabs in the Netherlands East Indies, and testified to this with a number of examples. As far as Sayyid 'Uthman was concerned, amazement was expressed that he supported a government that treated the Arabs so harshly. Interestingly, God was asked to reward Ahmad Khatib al-Minangkabawi for what he had said about Sayyid 'Uthman.[44]

The article did not specify what Ahmad Khatib had actually said, but, as we have seen, Ahmad Khatib and Sayyid 'Uthman had been engaged in a protracted polemic on the new Friday mosque in Palembang since 1894. Perhaps Rida was referring to this controversy, but Ahmad Khatib had also attacked Sayyid 'Uthman for writing and defending the *du'a'* for Queen Wilhelmina. In his autobiography, Ahmad Khatib referred to this as follows:

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40 For example, contrary to their Dutch superiors indigenous civil servants had to sit on the floor.

41 This forced labour was called *heerendiensten*, see ENI, ii, 76–82.

42 I deal with these further reports in Chapter Six.

43 *al-Manar* Vol. 2:43 (6 January 1900): 683–686. See on Muhammad ibn 'Aqil below, p. 179.

44 *al-Manar* Vol. 2:45 (20 January 1900): 717–719.

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> The Dutch ordered the Muslims to utter in the pulpits a prayer for their ruler instead of the ruler of the Muslims. And Sayyid ʿUthman ibn ʿAqil wrote a treatise to permit this prayer for the unbeliever. In this he provided weak evidence and supported the Dutch. After I had seen that, I was alarmed and I could not withhold myself from writing a treatise to refute him. I called this *Sayf al-khanajir ʿala riqab kulli man yadʿu li-l-kafir*, 'The sword from the daggers on the neck of anyone who utters the *duʿa*' for the unbeliever.'[45]

It is not certain whether Rida ever saw this text, but it is evident that he fully supported Ahmad Khatib in his criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman.

In the same pages of *al-Manar* a letter from Singapore, dated 12 December 1899, was also included, written by a certain Ahmad Sadiq (Ahmad 'the Truthful'), almost certainly a pseudonym. This letter referred to another meeting that Sayyid ʿUthman had convened at his house. Its author mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman had threatened those present at the meeting to reveal the names of the anonymous correspondents in the various newspapers containing articles on the Dutch injustice towards the Arabs. When they did not do this, Sayyid ʿUthman had become very angry.[46]

Later, in 1900, Rashid Rida mentioned Sayyid ʿUthman again in an isolated report stating that Rida had obtained a letter from a learned and virtuous Arab from Singapore, informing him that the letters that Rida had received from Java, as well as the articles in the press in Egypt and elsewhere concerning Sayyid ʿUthman, were based on jealousy and a low opinion (*suʾ al-zann*).[47] Apparently, this person had been convinced by Sayyid ʿUthman's writings in which he had defended himself.[48]

After this, for the time being at least, the discussion about Sayyid ʿUthman in *al-Manar* came to an end. However, from 1909 Sayyid ʿUthman and his works became the object of debate once more, albeit in a different context, as we will see in Chapter Six.

45 Ahmad Khatib, *al-Qawl al-tahif*, 40.

46 *al-Manar* Vol. 2:45 (20 January 1900): 717–719. This article had also been summarized in Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1635.

47 *al-Manar* Vol. 3:4 (23 March 1900): 96.

48 See below in the next section.

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## 6 Sayyid ʿUthman on the Defensive

In the period that Sayyid ʿUthman was under attack in the Middle Eastern press, he published a number of small brochures to defend himself. The message of these brochures is clear: they all serve the purpose of boosting the authority of Sayyid ʿUthman by stressing his noble Arab descent, his solid adherence to the well established scholarly tradition, and his piety. The brochures are mostly in Arabic, which indicates that they were directed at an Arab audience, mainly in the Netherlands East Indies, but perhaps also in the Middle East.

An early work of this type was a short Malay pamphlet of seven pages, entitled *Delapan faedah*, 'Eight wise lessons,' from the end of 1898. It linked up with his earlier work on the virtues of the Family of the Prophet. In it the special position of the *sayyids* was expressed. Of interest is the section that stressed that Hadramaut had produced many great scholars, both *sayyids* and *shaykhs*, who were even active in Mecca and Medina. In its final passage, the booklet listed the characteristics of an important scholar: fear of God, modesty, respect for other *'ulama'*, in particular for those who teach and stick closely to the faith, in which love and respect for the descendants of the Prophet forms an important part. Although Sayyid ʿUthman did not mention a direct reason why he had written the booklet, the profile of the important scholar given fits him very well. Given the date of writing, it is likely that he was defending himself here against his opponents in the debate surrounding the prayer for Wilhelmina. Because the booklet is in Malay it will not have played a direct role in his exchange with his Arab opponents, but will have been addressed primarily to the Muslim native population in order to secure his authority amongst them.

In another attempt to clear his name, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a pamphlet entitled *al-Fawa'id al-jamiʿa wa-l-matalib al-nafiʿa*, 'The collected wise lessons and the useful demands.' The booklet is in Arabic and was published at the end of 1899. It started stating, in general terms, that a believer should act properly, think well of others and avoid jealousy, but it rapidly becomes clear that he was addressing the same Arabs who had attacked him in the Middle Eastern newspapers (pp. 2–13). In 'The sixth wise lesson,' Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned a number of reprehensible acts (*manakir*) that every Muslim should despise; namely, deceptive bankruptcies and running off with someone's property; profiting from interest; and unreserved dedication to all kinds of amusement. He added that he had written many essays on this issue and mentions by name the *Nasihat al-shafiq*, the *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya* and the *Bunnat al-jalis*.[49] People

49 This latter work was published in 1897 and will be dealt with in Chapter Seven, p. 205.

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should accept the advice from these writings, because otherwise they would be regarded as unbelievers. The allegation by his opponents, Sayyid ʿUthman continued, that he only wanted to humiliate and insult the Arab race in order to strengthen his own position at their expense, was clearly contradicted by the contents of these writings. He thought his opponents needed to repent and turn away from having a low opinion (*su' al-zann*) to having a good opinion (*husn al-zann*) (pp. 13–18). The 'Seventh wise lesson' is also interesting because it dealt with the concept of 'amicable behaviour' (*mudara*), the term Sayyid ʿUthman used to characterize his attitude towards the colonial government in his defence of his *duʿa'* for the Dutch Queen. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the Shariʿa permitted *mudara* if it was based on public interest (*maslaha*) and he added that it could even become compulsory when it formed the basis of religious obligations (pp. 18–20). In 'The eighth wise lesson,' Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that when people wanted to request something, they should direct themselves to the right door, i.e. making their requests through newspapers would certainly not achieve what they wanted (pp. 20–21). Later, this brochure was discussed in the Middle Eastern press, in the Beirut-based *Thamarat al-funun*. In this article the author stated that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote this brochure to enhance his own position by claiming that the 'right door' was none other than Sayyid ʿUthman himself. However, the author continued, no one would do so, because Sayyid ʿUthman was a close partner of the Dutch administration and always acted against his compatriots.[50]

Two other examples of brochures that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote to defend himself were in Arabic and again addressed directly the Arabs who had attacked him. The first one was entitled *Sadd al-bab ʿan zann al-su' wa-l-ightirab*, 'The closing of the gate against slander and alienation,' and was published in February 1900 as a reaction to the attacks on him in the Cairene newspaper *al-Muʾayyad*. In his brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman started to explain that the Arabs were the best people of mankind and that in Java they were respected as a result of their exemplary way of life. However, Arabs were also being criticized at that time for three reasons: some Arabs did business in a dishonest way; some asked for excessive interest from the people and took the property of the orphans; and some led a life that contradicted their original exemplary lifestyle, for instance abandoning Arab dress and playing the lute (*qanbus*) (pp. 2–10). Although these Arabs thought that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote his books specifically to address and to insult them, he denied this, insisting that these books had a general aim to admonish the believers (pp. 8–15). A number of these critical Arabs had sent insulting lies to the newspaper because, in the words of

50 *Thamarat al-funun* nr. 1269 (1900), see Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1516.

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Sayyid ʿUthman, 'they thought I was a hypocrite in religious matters, because of my sympathy for and my cordiality with the foreigners, as the newspapers had explained.' However, these people were not aware of the difference between flattery (*al-mudahana*) and 'permitted amicable behaviour' (*al-mudara al-jaʾiza*), or the fact that what Sayyid ʿUthman was doing was for the well-being of the Muslim population, 'as we have mentioned in our *fatwa* on the making of the prayer for the Queen.' Moreover, his opponents should be aware of the statement of al-Ghazali, that the *ʿulama'* watch over those in power. The reason for publishing these negative newspaper articles was jealousy, which had arisen after he had addressed these Arabs and 'when I revealed the truth about the Dutch state and I showed gratitude for this, and my position was raised with a rank that esteemed all Arabs.'[51]

Another brochure written by Sayyid ʿUthman to bolster his position was entitled *Fath al-bab li-tahsin al-zann al-muthab*, 'The opening of the gate for the improvement of rewarded thinking,' from April 1900. It basically contained the full texts of official approvals (*taqariz*, sg. *taqriz*) of earlier works by Sayyid ʿUthman written by well-known scholars. Prominent among these approval givers was a scholar who was active in Tripoli, Sayyid Husayn ibn Muhammad al-Jisr al-Tarabulusi (1845–1909).[52] He had approved of the *Nasihat al-rafiq*, which he qualified as 'sincere advice to the believers,' the *Bunnat al-jalis* and the *Matiyat al-diraya*. Amongst other supporters of the work of Sayyid ʿUthman were the *muftis* of Mecca, Ahmad Dahlan and Babasil (pp. 4–11).

As we have seen frequently, Sayyid ʿUthman used to approach his former teachers and others regularly to ask for their approval of his writings. In this case, of particular interest is the occurrence of the name of Husayn al-Jisr. A few months before the publishing of the *Fath al-bab*, Sayyid ʿUthman had approached Husayn al-Jisr through a common friend in order to ask his advice on the phonograph,[53] and apparently they had remained in touch. Sayyid ʿUthman called him 'the author of the *al-Risala al-Hamidiyya*,' 'The Hamidian treatise.' This book, from 1886, bore this title because it was dedicated to the Ottoman Sultan Abdulhamid II (1876–1909). It defended Islam against modern culture and, for instance, discussed Darwinism. It had made al-Jisr famous in the Muslim world and even Sultan Abdulhamid had highly appreciated the book and

51 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Sadd al-bab*, 15–36, quotes on pp. 16, 24. The rank mentioned in this quote refers to the royal decoration.

52 He was born in Tripoli and studied in al-Azhar. He was also a teacher of Rashid Rida, see Ebert, *Religion und Reform*, 73–100. See also Snouck Hurgronje, *De Atjèhers*, II, 381–385.

53 See Snouck Hurgronje, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 419. I will deal with this issue in Chapter Seven.

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he generously rewarded its author. Thus, Husayn al-Jisr was a scholar with a great international reputation and, moreover, he was a kindred spirit of Sayyid ʿUthman, defending Islam against manifestations of modern life by referring to classical authorities and reasoning under the traditional principle of *taqlid*.[54] By invoking Husayn al-Jisr's great authority in the Muslim world, including in circles close to the Porte, Sayyid ʿUthman hoped to gain acceptance for his activities and writings among his opponents who had their base in the Ottoman Empire, thus silencing his jealous and lying critics.

We see, then, that in all these publications Sayyid ʿUthman tried to restore his damaged image. However, as we will see in the next section, not only Sayyid ʿUthman tried to restore his good name, but also other attempts were made.

## 7 An Ottoman Decoration?

In a letter of 20 November 1899, Sayyid ʿUthman approached De Goeje through his good friend Hoogenstraaten once again, requesting him to offer a number of his writings to the Ottoman authorities through their envoy in The Hague. Apparently, Sayyid ʿUthman held the conviction that these writings would prove his sincerity and the incorrectness of the false opinions about him. In a subsequent letter, dated 6 March 1900, Hoogenstraaten asked De Goeje again to make some démarches towards the Ottoman legation. This time, however, a completely new element was added to the request; namely, to propose that Sayyid ʿUthman be granted an Ottoman decoration.[55] Apparently, the underlying idea was that such a decoration would clear Sayyid ʿUthman of all the slander that had reached him from some of the Ottoman press. De Goeje made attempts in The Hague, but to no avail.[56]

In addition to this initiative from De Goeje, efforts were also made from official sources to grant Sayyid ʿUthman an Ottoman decoration. Apparently, within circles of the administration it was felt that Sayyid ʿUthman's authority was diminishing as a result of the negative press in the Middle East. For the administration this meant that his usefulness in terms of supporting policies with regard to Islam was decreasing. Consequently, there were plans made to restore his position. It is not clear where the plan came from, but it seems like-

54 More on *taqlid* in Chapter Seven.

55 Hoogenstraten, 'Letters to De Goeje.' A final letter to De Goeje (5 February 1901) contained an Arabic prayer that Sayyid ʿUthman had made on the occasion of the marriage of Queen Wilhelmina on 7 February 1901.

56 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1519.

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ly that, ultimately, it came from Sayyid ʿUthman himself, who as we have just seen had approached De Goeje through his friend Hoogenstraaten for the same purpose.[57] The idea was that an Ottoman medal would counterbalance the Dutch decoration, thus neutralizing the negative effects of the decoration granted by the unbelievers. In a letter to the Governor General from 9 October 1900 Snouck Hurgronje tried to initiate this by suggesting that he ask the Dutch envoy in Constantinople to recommend this to the authorities there. Snouck was aware of De Goeje's attempts in The Hague, but considered the Dutch envoy in Constantinople a better option.[58] I do not know whether the Dutch envoy to the Porte ever took any action, but Sayyid ʿUthman never received an Ottoman decoration.

## 8 Conclusion

In this chapter we have seen that from 1894 onwards Sayyid ʿUthman became an object of criticism in the Middle Eastern press due to his cooperation with the colonial Dutch administration. The situation got worse for Sayyid ʿUthman after he received a royal decoration in 1899 and Pan-Islamist ideas gained prominence in the Indies. As a result, his authority declined among the Pan-Islamist oriented Arabs, precisely the group that the Dutch authorities feared most. In an attempt to restore his authority among these opponents, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote many brochures to explain his position and attempts were made to organize an Ottoman decoration for him to counterbalance the Dutch one, but this failed.

While the initial criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman was very much inspired by and linked to the Pan-Islamist ideology and, as a consequence, was primarily anti-colonial in nature, we will see in the next chapter that some years later the criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman became more religious in character. Finally, it is important to mention that in the period dealt with in this chapter, Sayyid ʿUthman produced many more writings that were not directly relevant to the central focus of this chapter. This work will be dealt with in Chapter Seven.

57 Snouck Hurgronje thought that the idea had originated from Dr. Hoogenstraaten, ibid., 1654.

58 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1517–1519.

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CHAPTER 6

# Sayyid ʻUthman and the Egyptian Reformist Movement (1905–1912)

## 1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the influence of the Egyptian modernist movement in the Netherlands East Indies and Sayyid ʻUthman's reaction to it. Sayyid ʻUthman published extensively on the issue and some of his writings were also scrutinized by Rashid Rida in *al-Manar*. These writings give an interesting insight into the main differences between traditionalist Islam and modernist Islam, and they add to our understanding of the introduction of modernist thought in Southeast Asia. The period dealt with in this chapter starts around 1905, when Sayyid ʻUthman began writing against the Egyptian modernists, and ends with the year 1912, when we see Sayyid ʻUthman actively opposing a modern school in Palembang. Within this period falls the departure of Snouck Hurgronje from the Netherlands East Indies in 1906. As a result of this, the cooperation between Sayyid ʻUthman and Snouck came to an end and, from 1907 onwards, Sayyid ʻUthman's superior in the Office for Native Affairs became the Javanist G.A.J. Hazeu (1870–1929) who, following Snouck's departure, also became responsible for paying Sayyid ʻUthman his monthly allowance, which by that time had risen from one hundred guilders a month in 1889 to *f* 220.[1]

In the nineteenth century, new ideas about the position of Islam in politics and in society began to develop in the Muslim world, in response to the modernity that arrived along with European colonial expansion. At the centre of this intellectual response was the Cairene reformist movement, which rose to prominence at the end of the nineteenth century.[2] A major characteristic of this movement was that it reaffirmed original Islam as practiced by the Pious Forefathers (*al-salaf al-salih*), usually identified as the Companions of the Prophet and the Successors; that is to say, the first and the second generation of Muslims.[3] This pristine Islam was regarded as genuine and suitable for cop-

1 Jacquet, 'Hazeu.' Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 46.

2 The best comprehensive overview of these responses remains Hourani, *Arabic thought*. See also E.I. (2), iv, 141–171, s.v. *islah*. I use the terms 'reformist' and 'modernist' interchangeably.

3 This did not prevent the reformists from holding later scholars, such as al-Ghazali and Ibn Taymiyya (d. 1328) in high esteem.

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ing with the challenges presented by modernity. From this basic idea a number of new positions emerged, including the rejection of the *taqlid*, i.e. the servile acceptance of earlier traditional authorities of the four canonical interpretations of the schools of Law (*madhhabs*).[4] Instead of following *taqlid*, there was a need to reason independently (on the basis of the Qur'an and Hadith) – the principle of *ijtihad*. Another major characteristic of this reformism was its rejection of many of the later Islamic beliefs and practices, which had not been observed by the *salaf al-salih* and, therefore, should be eradicated. Among the prominent scholars who reformulated Islam on the basis of these new views were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani (1838–1897), Muhammad ʿAbduh (1849–1905) and his pupil Rashid Rida, who we have encountered as editor of *al-Manar*.

In the Netherlands East Indies the Cairene reformists were often designated with the term Wahhabis. This term derives from the eighteenth century Arabian reformer Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab. Central to the ideas of Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab was the concept of *tawhid*, the absolute unity of God, both in the sense of the indivisibility of the Essence of God and in the sense of absolute monotheism. As a result of this absolute monotheism, the believer was obliged to worship only God and every form of devotion that distracted the believer from God was strictly forbidden. In the domain of creed, this implied that the believer was not allowed to direct himself to the Prophet or the saints for intercession with God and that devotion towards the Prophet and the cult of saints was strictly forbidden. In terms of *fiqh*, the Wahhabis stressed the importance of the Qur'an and the Hadith, but remained faithful to the Hanbali *madhhab*, with Ibn Taymiyya as one of their main authorities, providing that this school was in line with the Qur'an and the Hadith. Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab rose to prominence when he convinced the ruler of Najd, Muhammad ibn Saʿud (d. 1765), to accept his puritanical ideas; consequently, thanks to this well-known Saudi-Wahhabi alliance this rigid brand of Islam became the dominant religion in Arabia, including in the Holy Cities of Mecca and Medina. As a result of the iconoclastic tendencies within this movement, many graves belonging to famous Muslim forefathers were destroyed. From the Arabian Peninsula, Wahhabism spread to other regions in the Muslim world and, for instance, the early nineteenth century Padri movement in West Sumatra was influenced by the Wahhabi ideology.[5]

4 These four schools were named after their founders (the four *imams*): Shafiʿis (named after al-Shafiʿi, d. 820), the Malikis (Malik, d. 796), the Hanbalis (Ahmad ibn Hanbal, d. 855) and the Hanafis (Abu Hanifa, d. 767), see Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 19–23.

5 Dobbin, *Islamic revivalism.* See for other influences on the Padri movement, Laffan, *The makings*, 41–44.

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Comparing the reformist and the Wahhabi understandings of Islam, we find a number of similarities. Firstly, both stress the importance of the Qur'an and Hadith as primary sources for Islamic theology and law. The Wahhabis, however, did not abandon the canonical schools of law altogether and in their writings, in addition to the Qur'an and the Hadith, they regularly referred to older authorities from the Hanbali school of Law, of which they formed a sub branch. The Cairene reformists, on the other hand, had detached themselves somewhat from the established schools of Law. Secondly, both streams were puritanical and very critical of all kinds of manifestations of popular Islam, which they regarded as later accretions to original Islam and therefore forbidden.

Especially in the early period of the transmission of reformist ideas from Cairo to the Dutch East Indies, the reformist movement was often called Wahhabi in the Netherlands East Indies, and this term was also used later to indicate the Cairene reformists. Clearly, the term 'Wahhabi' was used to denote both the Wahhabis and the reformists in view of the puritan tendencies within these two brands of Islam, but this ignored the differences in origin, style and legal methodology between the two. In the Netherlands East Indies, the term Wahhabi was often used as an expression of antagonism against the reformists. There are many examples of this usage and we have seen, for instance, that the *Qamar al-zaman* employs the term Wahhabis in this negative sense (stanza 175). In Minangkabau, in the early stages of the tensions between the followers of the Cairene reformists, called the Kaum Muda ('the Young Generation'), and their traditionalist opponents, the Kaum Tua ('the Old Generation'), who continued to follow their Shafiʿi *madhhab*, the former were disparagingly addressed as 'Wahhabis.'[6]

In Southeast Asia, the ideas of the Cairene reformists were spread through *al-Manar*, but this journal was in Arabic and therefore accessible only to those with a command of the language. Consequently, we see that from the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, Malay language periodicals also started to appear in order to voice the new reformist ideas. The first was the Singapore-based *al-Iman*, which appeared from 1906 till 1908.[7]

## 2 Sayyid ʿUthman's Initial Reaction to the Reformist Movement

Interestingly, there had been contacts between the editors of *al-Imam* and Sayyid ʿUthman. Two letters from Hazeu in his capacity of Advisor for Native

6 Hamka, *Ajahku*. This basic dichotomy between Kaum Tua and Kaum Muda is represented in present-day Indonesia through, respectively, the Nadlatul Ulama and the Muhammadiyyah.

7 Roff, *Origins*, 56–67; Hamka, *Ajahku*, 96–98.

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Affairs to the Governor General J.B. van Heutsz (1904–1909) suggest that this journal was watched by the colonial authorities in the Netherlands East Indies. In the first letter, dated 9 August 1906, Hazeu draws attention to *al-Imam* and mentions that it seemed to include a new religious élan and Pan-Islamist propaganda. In the second letter, dated 30 August 1906, Hazeu writes to the Governor General to inform him that Sayyid ʿUthman had visited Sayyid Hasan ibn Shahab (1852–1914), one of the editors of *al-Imam* in Singapore to discuss the new journal.[8] Sayyid Hasan had asked for a contribution from Sayyid ʿUthman for the journal and Sayyid ʿUthman had promised to provide him with one. Moreover, they had agreed that Sayyid ʿUthman would produce some publicity for his publications.[9] It appears that, initially, Sayyid ʿUthman had not been aware of the nature of *al-Imam*, but the journal never published a contribution from him. Later, in a personal letter to Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden, dated 25 July 1909, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned to his former superior that throughout its existence the journal had only resulted in dissension.[10]

Prior to this Singaporean contact, Sayyid ʿUthman had followed *al-Manar* with great interest. As the most important mouthpiece of the Cairene reformist movement, *al-Manar* voiced new and controversial ideas and particular issues will have been of great concern to Sayyid ʿUthman. One example is a famous *fatwa* that appeared in *al-Manar* in 1905.[11] This *fatwa* was given at the request of a Hadrami Arab from Singapore and approved of the marriage of a *sharifa*, a female descendant of the Prophet Muhammad, to a non-*sayyid*, thus denying the principle of *kafa'a* in marriage. By publishing the *fatwa*, Rashid Rida was rejecting the principle of *kafa'a* and, consequently, destabilizing the entire social order in which the *sayyids* formed the highest rank within society.

This and other opinions voiced in *al-Manar* must have been appalling to Sayyid ʿUthman and no doubt urged him to react in print. The first reaction of Sayyid ʿUthman in writing was an Arabic booklet from August 1905. In it, he examined a *fatwa* issued in *al-Manar* that had caused a lot of controversy, not only in Egypt but also in the Muslim world at large. Although Sayyid ʿUthman did not mention the *fatwa* explicitly, it is clear that he was referring to the so-called Transvaal *fatwa*, issued by the Grand *mufti* of Egypt, Muhammad ʿAbduh, at the request of Muslims from Transvaal in South Africa in 1904. ʿAbduh had stated that it was permitted to eat the meat of animals slaughtered

8 In the section 'Passengers' in the *Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 8 June 1906, it was mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman would depart the following day for Singapore.

9 Hazeu, 'Letters to van Heutsz.'

10 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje.'

11 *al-Manar* Vol. 8:15 (1905): 580–588.

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by Christians, even if the animal had been strangled or beaten to death with an axe (*balta*) prior to the actual act of slaughtering.[12] Sayyid ʿUthman's booklet is called an 'occasional paper' (*ʿujala*) and bears the revealing title *ʿAyn al-haqq wa-fasl al-khitab fi ikhraj al-munkhaniqa wa-l-mawqudha ʿan hill taʿam ahl al-kitab*, 'The exact truth and the decisive speech about the exclusion of whatever has been strangled and killed by a blow from the permission to eat the food of the People of the Book.'[13]

In the pamphlet, Sayyid ʿUthman stated that a legal judgement or a *fatwa* should be issued on the basis of reliable books from within a legal school of thought. According to these books, the consumption of meat slaughtered by the People of the Book, that is the Jews and the Christians, was permitted when it was also permitted for themselves (pp. 2–9). However, according to all these sources, the slaughtering should take place by cutting the gullet and the throat of the animal with a knife. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the fact that the 'strangled' (*munkhaniqa*) and the 'beaten to death' (*mawqudha*) animals were considered to belong to the forbidden category of corpses, following the statements of the classical authorities, it was prohibited to consume them (pp. 9–18).

A slightly later text in Arabic also addressed the followers of Mohammed ʿAbduh. The text was published in October 1907 and was entitled *Minhaj al-saʿada al-abadiyya bi-nayl al-niʿam al-sarmadiyya*, 'The way to eternal happiness by obtaining everlasting graces.' This eternal happiness was reached when ten graces of God had been obtained in Paradise, culminating in the seeing of God and His favor (*ruʾyat Rabb al-ʿalamin wa-ridwanihi*) as the greatest grace (pp. 2–5). This eternal happiness could be reached by piety (*taqwa*), which could be obtained by complying with seven obligations and seven prohibitions. Among the obligations Sayyid ʿUthman listed a number of his usual topics, like the seeking of the correct knowledge, the following of the exemplary life of the great *imams* and the ʿAlawi forefathers, who all followed the example of the Prophet, and the giving of religious advice (pp. 5–16). The seven forbidden matters, which prevented one from reaching eternal happiness, are more specific and can be linked to debates in which Sayyid ʿUthman was involved. The first thing one should avoid was ignorance caused by abandoning the

12 *Al-Manar* 6: 20 (1904): 772–788. It was also mentioned in Sayyid ʿUthman's later polemics against *al-Manar*, entitled *Luzum al-hidhar*, 6–7. See also Adams, 'Muhammad ʿAbduh,' 24–27.

13 'Decisive speech,' was taken from Qur'an 38: 20; 'strangled' (*munkhaniqa*) and 'beaten to death' (*mawqudha*) were taken from Qur'an 5: 3.

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teaching of necessary religious knowledge. In this context Sayyid ʿUthman made the following remark:

> Lately, a new philosophy has appeared, a new knowledge, a foreign civilization and a claim for independent reasoning (*ijtihad*) and dependence upon its practitioners. They have made these into principles, which were hitherto unknown, and they spread them among the Muslims by means of printed materials, evoking doubt and innovations that were not well-known in the past to the common people and causing fear. Consequently, every wise man in religious matters started to fear for the faith of the weak as a result of the dangers of these new things and what they bring (pp. 18–19).

The biggest of these dangers, the pamphlet continued, was their reluctance to follow the example of the exemplary lives of the Pious Forefathers and instead adopted foreign dress and lifestyle; moreover, they produced arguments to approve of all this. Among the other prohibitions Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned was the claim that one had reached the state of a saint, or illumination, as well as arrogance towards or ridiculing someone who preached the truth (pp. 21–25).[14] The seventh and final point that prevented one from reaching eternal happiness is also interesting and reads as follows:

> Among the most evil deeds in religion and among the biggest machinations of the cursed is the enrolling of children in the schools of the foreigners, which contain the seeds to hate Islam and to despise it in their hearts.

To support his view, Sayyid ʿUthman referred here to Yusuf al-Nabhani's work *Irshad al-hayara*, which had also warned fiercely against Western education (p. 25). Yusuf ibn Ismaʿil al-Nabhani was born in Northern Palestine in 1849 and died in Beirut in 1932; he was a major opponent of the Egyptian reformists and a champion of traditionalist Islam.[15]

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14 Both points addressed Haji Hasan Mustafa, with whom he had a debate on mysticism, see Chapter Seven. I have rendered this passage here, since Rida would later react to this, cf. infra.

15 Zirikly, *al-Aʿlam*, VIII, 218. The full title of his book reads *Irshad al-hayara fi tahdhir al-Muslimin min madaris al-Nasara*, 'The right guidance of the confused through warning the Muslims against Christian schools.' Some of his books are still for sale in Indonesia, like his compilation of saintly miracles.

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The *Minhaj al-saʿada* ended by mentioning the means through which one could obtain eternal happiness; that is to say, reflection upon the promise for reward and the threat for punishment (*al-waʿd wa-l-waʿid*),[16] the Last Day, Paradise and Hell; the listening to the Hadith about *al-waʿd wa-l-waʿid*; the reading of the books of the Pious Forefathers and their collections of advice; thankfulness towards God for His grace of having granted Islam and the genealogical bond with the Prophet; and finally, a permanent awareness of death and the Hereafter (pp. 30–32).

Both the *ʿAyn al-haqq* and the *Minhaj al-saʿada* were meant for a local audience who knew Arabic and were directed at the Arabs in Batavia and Southeast Asia at large in order to warn them against the Egyptian reformists.

Another small booklet that Sayyid ʿUthman published in this period did not directly address the Egyptian reformists, but rather dealt with the nature of Islamic scholarship and education. This booklet was published in January 1907 and was a small polemical work in Arabic, entitled *al-Nubdha al-latifa fi l-nasiha al-munifa*, 'The gentle pamphlet with excellent advice.' In this booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman defended the unnamed author of a pamphlet entitled *Nakhlat al-watan*, 'The palm tree of the homeland.' The homeland (*al-watan*) of the title was Hadramaut, while its author should be identified as Sayyid Hasan ibn Shahab, who, as we have just seen, Sayyid ʿUthman met in Singapore at the end of June in 1906.This person was a merchant in Singapore who had originated from Tarim. In his booklet, Sayyid Hasan criticized the traditional education in Hadramaut, which he thought even in strictly religious terms too narrow and he proposed new topics for the curriculum, like the methodology of Islamic law (*usul al-fiqh*). Moreover, he proposed more modern teaching methods, like putting students of the same level in the same group.[17] According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the author of the *Nakhlat al-watan* completely conformed with texts from the Qur'an, the Hadith and the scholarly tradition, and in his writing promoted knowledge, education and right guidance, which were all useful for the homeland (*al-watan*). Moreover, this person was full of praise for Hadramaut and had stimulated the donation of money for the development of knowledge and education in the homeland, and fully respected its scholars and saints.[18]

Thus, Sayyid ʿUthman's *al-Nubdha al-latifa* formed a small part of an internal Hadrami discussion on the scholarly and educational tradition in Hadramaut

16 This is a well-known standard belief in Muʿtazili theology. I think Sayyid ʿUthman used the words here in their Qur'anic sense, not being aware of their Muʿtazili connotation.

17 Freitag, *Indian Ocean migrants*, 286. In the work of Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami awakening*, the concept of *al-watan* takes a central place.

18 Sayyid ʿUthman, *al-Nubdha al-latifa*, 1–8. I wish to express my gratitude to the late Mr. M.A. Alaydrus for kindly giving me a photocopy of this text.

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and, remarkably, in this pamphlet Sayyid ʿUthman supported Hasan ibn Shahab, who had much more modern ideas on education than Sayyid ʿUthman himself. Apparently, as with his initial intention to support the activities of the modernist journal *al-Imam*, Sayyid ʿUthman was not completely aware of the precise views of Ibn Shahab on education. As we shall see in the next section, the nature of knowledge and education was indeed a hotly debated issue between the traditionalists and the reformists.

## 3 Sayyid ʿUthman and Rashid Rida in Dialogue

In addition to the two publications dealt with above, Sayyid ʿUthman also published other writings related to the Egyptian reformists. These writings became widely known as they were discussed by Rashid Rida in his journal *al-Manar*.

### *Legal Methodology*

The first of these publications was a work entitled *Fasl al-khitab.*[19] This work was sent to Rashid Rida with the request for a *fatwa*. Rida issued the *fatwa* and this marked the beginning of an exchange between Sayyid ʿUthman and Rida. The full title of this work reads *Fasl al-khitab fi bayan al-sawab*, 'The decisive speech on the obvious truth,' and it is a small, undated treatise of 49 pages in Arabic. The photocopy I have comes from the legacy of Rashid Rida[20] and has a handwritten note on the title page. In this note the sender explained to Rashid Rida that Sayyid ʿUthman was the religious advisor to the Netherlands East Indies government and that he had the full support of the government. For this reason, none of the *'ulama'* was able to contradict his treacherous writings, and for the same reason the sender wished to remain anonymous, because he feared being thrown in prison.

The *Fasl al-khitab* consists of two sections; the first deals with the prohibition on discussing the dissension between the Companions of the Prophet as well as the approval of the Pious Forefathers (*al-salaf*) for this prohibition. The second section deals with the saints, their characteristics and their miracles. At the beginning of the work Sayyid ʿUthman said he was motivated to write this book by a desire that his fellow believers act like him; namely,

> to follow our Forefathers (*aslafina*), the most knowledgeable *imams*, [...] and in other religious matters in general, because they are the bearers of

19 This phrase is taken from Qur'an 38: 20. Also the *Qamar al-zaman* mentions this work (stanza 176).

20 I thank Amr Riyad for giving me this photocopy.

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> the Shariʿa of Muhammad; they are the People of the Tradition and the Community (*ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamaʿa*) and the most important leaders whose words have been derived from the Book and the Sunna (pp. 2–3).

Before he started with the first theme Sayyid ʿUthman asked his readers for understanding for his weak command of Arabic and I wonder whether this should be regarded as a conventional opening, or whether he was, in fact, really aware of his shortcomings in the language. Earlier, in a personal letter to Snouck Hurgronje (4 January 1887), he had also remarked that he was not a good writer. Perhaps this remark also shows that Sayyid ʿUthman was aware that his writing might be read by Rashid Rida, whose style of writing he seems to have admired.[21] Later we will see that he was indeed attacked for his bad command of Arabic.

The first section of the *Fasl al-khitab* (pp. 2–29) begins with an explanation that there were different ranks of the *ʿulama'*, e.g. scholars with absolute *ijtihad*, like the four *imans* (the founders of the canonical schools of Law); scholars with *ijtihad* within the schools of Law, like al-Ghazali; scholars with *ijtihad* in giving *fatwas*, like Ibn Hajar; and 'our 'Alawi Forefathers.' All these scholars belonged to the People of the Tradition and the Community and should not be contradicted. In the remaining parts of this section, Sayyid ʿUthman dealt with the virtues of the Companions and the obligation to venerate them, and to follow them in word and deed.[22]

The second section of the *Fasl al-khitab* (pp. 29–49) deals with the saints, the conditions of sainthood, mystics, their miracles, and the permissibility to visit their graves and to ask their intercession.[23] Next, Sayyid ʿUthman dealt with his disapproval of the Wahhabi innovation (*bidʿa*[24]), which he regarded as the greatest dissension (*fitna*) in religion. According to him, the Wahhabis condemned everyone who asked God's help through mediation of a saint or the Prophet; they rejected the saints; denied the existence of miracles; forbade the visiting of graves, including that of the Prophet; destroyed graves; and prohibited the reading of particular books, like the *Dala'il al-khayrat*, 'The proofs for good deeds.'[25] He went on to explain that many scholars had written against

21 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Fard al-nasiha*, 14.

22 This section of the book was written within the framework of the debate on the cursing of Muʿawiyya, which was conducted in *al-Manar*, see below, p. 179.

23 On p. 41 Sayyid ʿUthman mentions that he himself had often performed these grave visits in Hadramaut. See also above, p. 67.

24 A *bidʿa* (pl. *bidaʿ*) is an innovation in theology, ritual, or the customs of daily life, which did not exist in early Islam, and is therefore disapproved of.

25 Devotional work in praise of the Prophet Muhammad by the fifteenth-century Moroccan mystic al-Djazuli, E.I. (2), ii, 528.

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these ideas, like Ibn Hajar and Muhammad Babasil. Their ideas originated with Ibn Taymiyya, but this scholar, as well as Ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, had been refuted by many scholars of the *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamaʿa*. Although Sayyid ʿUthman did not identify the Wahhabis in this book with the Egyptian reformists, it is clear that we must understand this work within the framework of the reformist discussions about legal methodology and saint worship, which were key issues in reformist discourse.

Interestingly, Rashid Rida discussed this booklet extensively in a *fatwa* in *al-Manar* in September 1909. This *fatwa* was issued following a request from an anonymous questioner from Batavia, 'who longs for the disclosure of the truth and who fears imprisonment.' As we have seen, this was the same remark that was written on the copy sent to Rashid Rida. The questioner was concerned about the rigidity of some scholars who held on to old authorities, like Ibn Hajar, and obliged people to continue to follow them. Whosoever dared to contradict those scholars met with anger and was declared guilty of unlawful innovation (*bidʿa*) and error. These scholars also declared Ibn Taymiyya a sinner (*fasiq*) and anyone who regarded him as a Shaykh al-Islam was also regarded a sinner. According to them, it was not sufficient to refer only to the Qur'an and the Sunna in order to reach a legal judgment, but they also required reference to great authorities. They opposed the opinions expressed in *al-Manar* in praise of the Shaykh al-Islam, the rejection of innovations and *taqlid* and other issues. Moreover, the questioner wanted Rashid Rida's detailed opinion about a brochure that he regarded as a characteristic example of the work of those scholars and which dealt with the prohibition of the translation of the Qur'an.[26]

Rida began his answer to this request by mentioning that the questioner had sent him two brochures printed in Java and written by Sayyid ʿUthman, 'the advisor for religious affairs for the Dutch government in the Netherlands East Indies (*Jawah*),' one dealing with the prohibition of the translating of the Qur'an and the *Fasl al-khitab*. Rashid Rida characterized Sayyid ʿUthman, together with al-Nabhani, as scholars who followed older authorities, like Ibn Hajar. However, in quoting the Prophetic traditions in his two brochures, Sayyid ʿUthman did not follow the guidelines on this by the same Ibn Hajar. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman considered al-Ghazali a pillar of religion, while this same al-Ghazali had condemned the *taqlid*, as well as jurisconsults of an even higher status than Ibn Hajar. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman ordered that believers should follow the mystics, even though they were precisely the people who had freed

26 This booklet, written by Sayyid ʿUthman, is entitled *Hukm al-Rahman bi-nahy ʿan tarjamat al-Qurʾan* and will be dealt with in Chapter Seven.

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themselves of the *taqlid* and had taken their religion only from the Qurʾan and the Sunna. Another contradiction pointed out by Rida was that Sayyid ʿUthman and his kind behaved like *mujtahids*, because they gave legal judgments without textual support, while simultaneously rejecting *ijtihad*.

Next, Rashid Rida called upon these scholars to do away with their false methodology and to return to the Qurʾan and the Sunna. This was because the *salaf* – among whom Rashid Rida counted the four *imams* – had agreed upon the prohibition of *taqlid*, because it had moved too far away from the Qurʾan and the Sunna. Sayyid ʿUthman and his ilk in Southeast Asia and in Hadramaut claimed that they follow al-Shafiʿi, while the same scholar forbade the principle of *taqlid*. The four *imams* had commented upon the Qurʾan and the Hadith in order to make their contents clear to the people, but they had never intended for their works to replace the Qurʾan and the Sunna. According to Rida, Sayyid ʿUthman should admit that the Qurʾan and the Hadith were the most beautiful sources of religion, but he stuck to the opinion that all Muslims should follow the scholars of the last rank he mentioned in his book, namely scholars who clarified the *mujtahids* (the *ahl al-tarjih*), like Ibn Hajar. Moreover, even the greatest authorities in Islam, such as ʿUmar, al-Shafiʿi, al-Nawawi, al-Ghazali and others, did not consider their own ideas as fixed, and sometimes reconsidered their opinions. In conclusion, Rida remarked that Muslims should use the opinions of the four *imams* as a clarification, but that the understanding of the Qurʾan and the Hadith was the essential goal and the basis for the right guidance. For this reason, the *umma* should not forget to teach both sources and to ground their teaching in *fiqh*.

Subsequently, Rida devoted a section to Sayyid ʿUthman's disqualification (*taʿn*) of Ibn Taymiyya, an issue in which Sayyid ʿUthman's followed Ibn Hajar. According to Rida, Ibn Hajar criticized a number of Ibn Taymiyya's views, for instance that the Qurʾan was created; that the Prophet did not have high ranking; and that the world was eternal (*qadim*). However, if one studied the writings of Ibn Taymiyya, one would discover that this was not what he said. Furthermore, other authorities with a higher rank than Ibn Hajar had judged Ibn Taymiyya positively. To end his review of the *Fasl al-khitab*, Rida expressed the hope that Sayyid ʿUthman would take this into account and would abandon his wrong way of thinking, despite being 'the associate of the unjust rulers (*al-zalimin*) and the ally of the tyrants.' If Sayyid ʿUthman failed to agree with these comments, Rida invited him to correct them with solid arguments.[27] Later, Sayyid ʿUthman would take up this challenge.

27 *al-Manar* Vol. 12:8 (14 September 1909): 614–623. Rida did not go into Sayyid ʿUthman's booklet on the translation of the Qurʾan separately, but thought it sufficient to refer to his opinion on this, given in *al-Manar* Vol. 11 (1908): 268–274.

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This exchange between Sayyid ʻUthman and Rashid Rida makes clear that the basic legal methodologies of the two men were completely at odds with one another: while Sayyid ʻUthman called for a reliance on the interpretation of the Qur'an and the Hadith by established scholars from the canonical tradition, Rida called for a fresh reading of the founding texts of Islam.

### *Education*

Less than two months later, Sayyid ʻUthman was again the object of criticism in the pages of *al-Manar*, this time on the issue of education. Until the introduction of modernist ideas, education basically consisted of instruction in exclusively Islamic subjects, without paying attention to secular topics, while the style of teaching was focused on the memorization of the Qur'an and other texts. A fixed and standardized curriculum, formal classrooms with desks, blackboards and modern school books with illustrations were not yet in use. This type of traditional education was provided within the Arab communities in the Netherlands East Indies, but all this started to change with the introduction of modernist inspired thinking, which aimed at preparing the students for the modern world. Like legal methodology, education also became a hotly debated topic between modernists and traditionalists.

The issue of education is taken up in an article in *al-Manar* from the end of 1909, entitled 'The reform movement in Southeast Asia,' signed by a certain S.M.M. from Batavia, Jawa. The anonymous author started praising *al-Manar* and expressed his agreement with the criticism of two writings by Sayyid ʻUthman in one of its previous issues. The author continued that, as a result of the inspiration of *al-Manar*, a number of new Islamic schools had been established in the Netherlands East Indies that taught Arabic, religious sciences and some secular topics. These schools had been opened in Batavia, Palembang, Surabaya, and Kudus and were headed by Sayyid Muhammad ibn Hashim ibn Tahir, a grandson of Sayyid ʻUthman. These schools were organized according to modern principles and two months after the school in Kudus had opened, it examined its pupils with excellent results. Finally, the author asked the opinion of *al-Manar* on a booklet written by Sayyid ʻUthman, entitled *Jamʻ al-nafa'is*, a copy of which he had enclosed in the correspondence.[28]

In a later issue of *al-Manar* Rashid Rida would indeed give his reaction to this booklet and I will deal with his comments later. First, however, I will go into this work and its background. The full title of the booklet reads *Jamʻ al-nafa'is fi tahsin al-madaris*, 'The collection of pearls dealing with the improve-

28 *al-Manar* Vol. 12:11 (13 December 1909): 871–873.

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ment of the schools.'[29] Sayyid ʿUthman wrote this booklet to correct his grandson Muhammad ibn Hashim, who was the leader of the new schools in the Netherlands East Indies. He was the only child of one of the daughters of Sayyid ʿUthman from his marriage in Hadramaut, Sharifa Fatima. This daughter had married a member of the well-known Ibn Tahir family of *sayyids* and from this marriage in 1883 Muhammad ibn Hashim was born in al-Masila, south of Tarim in Wadi Hadramaut. He was born in the house of his deceased paternal great-grandfather Imam ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir, the former teacher of Sayyid ʿUthman.[30] Muhammad ibn Hashim was educated first in his hometown and later in Tarim. His interest in the Cairene reformist movement was evident from his subscription to *al-Manar*, which dated from the period before his arrival in the Netherlands East Indies. In 1907, Ibn Hashim arrived in Southeast Asia, where he initially engaged in trading. In April 1907, his name appeared for the first time in the pages of *al-Manar*[31] and from this time onwards his name popped up from time to time. From 1909, he was involved in efforts to set up a new educational institution in the city of Palembang.[32]

Sayyid ʿUthman was aware that this grandson had lavishly praised *al-Manar* for having 'renewed religion' and for its contributions to the reform in Southeast Asia. Moreover, he had been informed that his grandson had become a leader in Palembang and that he had abandoned the traditional Arab long shirt (*qamis*) and the turban for the European coat (*jas*) and Dutch trousers, and that he was about to replace his fez (*tarbush*) with a European style hat. Sayyid ʿUthman considered this to be a deviation from proper behaviour, bringing shame to his Forefathers (*nenek moyang*) and damage to his own reputation, precisely because Muhammad ibn Hashim was his grandson. Consequently, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a letter in Arabic on 2 September 1908 to his grandson, in which he called him 'the recalcitrant descendant' (*al-walad al-ʿaqq*). He mentioned that he had read in *al-Manar* how his grandson had praised its editor Rashid Rida and how he had asked him for advice. Sayyid ʿUthman condemned this and he expressed his hope that his grandson would change his ways.[33]

29 My thanks are due to the late Sayyid M.A. Alaydarus who gave me a copy in Jakarta in November 2006.

30 His full pedigree reads Muhammad ibn Hashim ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn al-Imam ʿAbd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Tahir. I thank Aji Alatas for this information.

31 *al-Manar* Vol. 10:2 (1907): 115–117.

32 Muhammad ibn Hashim, *al-Dawr al-kafi*, 11; Bawazir, *al-Fikr wa-l-thaqafa*, 178–179.

33 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Correspondence with *sayyids* in Palembang,' 8.

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In a subsequent letter, dated 8 September 1908, Sayyid ʿUthman addressed two prominent Arabs in Palembang, Sayyid Jaʿfar ibn Shaykh al-Saqqaf, the Captain of the Arabs, and Sayyid Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Munawwar to ask for their assistance, because the letter he had sent to his grandson, pleading with him to return to the right path, had not yielded any results. In this letter, Sayyid ʿUthman described his disobedient and infidel grandson, Muhammad ibn Hashim who, as he stated, was acting against the Qurʾan and the Sunna and who was teaching the children of the Arabs unbelief as a result of his assimilation to European dress, language and outward appearance. Sayyid ʿUthman asked the two *sayyids* to correct this grandson, who was following the editor of *al-Manar*, who Sayyid ʿUthman characterized as 'the Devil of the Age' (*Dajjal al-waqt*).[34]

When both letters did not have any result Sayyid ʿUthman published his *Jamʿ al-nafaʾis* at the end of September 1909. The work consisted of three parts. The first part dealt with the virtues of knowledge, the obligation to spread knowledge through teaching, the virtues of teaching, the nature of teaching (this should be similar to that in Arab countries and teachers should avoid non-Arab dress), the nature of the *madrasa* (one should follow the *salaf al-salihun* and use books like those of al-Ghazali, Salim ibn Sumayr, ʿAbd Allah al-Haddad and others), the virtues of granting money for education and the fruits of learning.[35] The second part was very brief and mentioned two means to achieve the required education, namely unity (*ijtimaʿ al-kalima*) and the granting of money.[36] In the third part, Sayyid ʿUthman warned against everything that contradicted his ideal of education. Firstly, he rejected the idea that schools that had implemented certain foreign elements had better results. Secondly, he warned against the imitation of foreigners in dress and outward appearance and the claim that this was progress. According to him, this was the opposite of progress, as was evident from the Prophetic tradition 'Whosoever imitates a group, belongs to them' and on the basis of another Hadith 'Whosoever loves a group, will be gathered with them' [sc. on the Last Day]. Finally, he warned against abandoning the traditional religious books and replacing them with history books and journals. In these modern schools the idea of *ijtihad* was propagated and the idea of *taqlid* condemned. Anyone who lent his support to such schools was a sinner. Finally, Sayyid ʿUthman invited the reader to study the work *Irshad al-hayara* by Yusuf al-Nabhani.[37]

34 Ibid., 8–10.

35 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Jamʿ al-nafaʾis*, 2–9.

36 Ibid., 9–10.

37 Ibid., 10–12.

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As we have seen above, a copy of the *Jamʿ al-nafa'is* had been sent to Rashid Rida and he would comment upon it in the February 1910 issue of *al-Manar*. The person who had sent this booklet to Rida had mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman aimed to obstruct the revival (*nahda*) of the Muslims in the field of establishing new schools. However, Rida replied that Sayyid ʿUthman was convinced that he was promoting the Muslim cause in this book, like he was doing in his other books, and that he was not deliberately obstructing Muslims. In his review of the booklet, Rida criticized Sayyid ʿUthman for including al-Ghazali, Salim ibn Sumayr, ʿAbd Allah al-Haddad among the Pious Forefathers (*al-salaf al-salih*) and he thought it very strange that *muqallidun*, like Sayyid ʿUthman, who acknowledged that they were not qualified to base themselves independently on the Qur'an and the Hadith, allowed themselves to rely on the Hadith 'Whosoever imitates a group, belongs to them,' and, on the basis of this, prohibited all useful European inventions. However, Rida thought that this Hadith was weak in its transmission and, moreover, that the rejection of foreign things that this Tradition implied was restricted to religious matters and did not include matters in the field of politics, management, technology, and agriculture. For this reason, Sayyid ʿUthman's prohibition of foreign schools could not be based on this Hadith. Moreover, the structured schools, which were modelled on foreign schools, already existed in Egypt, Istanbul and Syria and none of the *'ulama'* in those countries rejected them. This was strange because Sayyid ʿUthman regarded himself as a scholar of the same rank as those from the famous al-Azhar University in Cairo. The other Hadith adduced by Sayyid ʿUthman ('Whosoever loves a group, will be gathered with them') also showed his incompetence, not only because this text was weak, but also because it was wrongly interpreted. According to Rida it was clear that the pupils in European type schools were much more eager to learn, but Sayyid ʿUthman was not aware of this. And he continued:

> I have shown that the two Hadiths that he quotes do not prove what he wishes, after we stated what they really meant. What he has written is very harmful, despite the fact that he wants to do good through his efforts (*ijtihad*), but he is not an expert in *ijtihad*[38] – may God Almighty pardon him.

38 Here Rida made a play on the word *ijtihad*, which he used the first time in a general sense, and the second time in a technical sense, as the opposite of *taqlid*. This made the remark even more belittling.

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Moreover, Rida considered the work to be intellectually weak, full of errors and badly formulated. In conclusion, Rida mentioned that people who were interested in modern education should not take notice of this booklet, 'nor of any of the other writings of this man.'[39]

The issue of education was taken up again in *al-Manar* in May 1910, when the editor of the Singapore-based journal *al-Islah* asked for a *fatwa* from Rida after a debate had arisen in his journal following the articles on education in *al-Manar*. The issue was whether economic and political unity of the *umma* should precede the unity and uniformity of education, as advocated by Sayyid Muhammad ibn Hashim; or, conversely, should unity of education be an instrument to create political unity, as advocated by Hasan ibn Shahab.[40] In his *fatwa* Rida stressed that both strategies should not exclude each other but that they should work together and called for unity among the Hadramis. In the same *fatwa* Rashid Rida suggested that rich Hadramis in Java and Singapore might establish a charitable foundation (*jam'iyya khayriyya*) to collect money and found modern schools to educate the poor people free of charge.[41] These schools should not only teach Arabic and religious topics, but also secular topics like mathematics, agriculture, economy, history and geography. In his writing, Rida also dealt with Sayyid 'Uthman, 'the obvious enemy of the reform,' who was an opponent of the new type of schools and who denied the necessity to teach any field of knowledge that was common among the unbelievers. Moreover, Rida warned against Sayyid 'Uthman, because he was a servant of the Dutch state and a weak scholar, whose 'Arabic is teeming with grammatical and linguistic mistakes in terminology and style,' and who was unable to distinguish between a true and a false Hadith. Nevertheless, a number of rich Hadramis in Java did follow Sayyid 'Uthman, because they were misled by his writings, which the Dutch used as instruments to indoctrinate the Muslims and obstruct progress.[42]

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39 *al-Manar* Vol. 13:1 (1910): 60–63. See also Abaza, 'Southeast Asia and the Middle East,' 106–107. Prior to this, Rida had mentioned Sayyid 'Uthman marginally by referring to a writing of Hasan ibn Shahab who praised Sayyid 'Uthman for his sincerity in religion and good intentions in acting like a *muqallid*. Rida, however, repeated his negative views on Sayyid 'Uthman, see *al-Manar* 12:12 (11 January 1910): 955.

40 He was the author of the *Nakhlat al-watan*, which Sayyid 'Uthman had supported, see above, p. 167.

41 It appears that Rida was not aware of the existence of the organization bearing this name in the Netherlands East Indies, see Mobini-Kesheh, *The Hadrami awakening*, 35–37.

42 *al-Manar* Vol. 13:4 (9 May 1910): 260–264. A certain Sayyid 'Abd Allah al-'Aydarus had granted the enormous amount of *f* 40.000 to renovate the mosque in Pekojan, *Nieuws van den Dag in Nederlandsch-Indië*, 16 August 1906.

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As with the previous issue of legal methodology, Rida completely distanced himself from Sayyid ʿUthman on the issue of education and he portrayed him as someone who obstructed progress.

## 4 Answering the Challenge of Rashid Rida

As we have seen in Chapter One, the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 176) mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a number of books in response to the reformist challenge. Three of these were mentioned by title and all three have been preserved. Two are in Arabic and this demonstrates that they were meant as a contribution to the transnational intellectual debate on Islamic reformism. The third one is in Malay and was aimed at the indigenous Muslims at home. In addition to these three, Sayyid ʿUthman also wrote other publications related to the rise of reformism in the Indies.

The first of these writings had the revealing title *Luzum al-hidhar mimma fi khalt al-Manar*, 'The necessity to be alert against the confusion of *al-Manar*.' It was published in August 1910 and can be regarded as a direct response to the challenge of Rashid Rida following the aforementioned *fatwa* of September 1909. Sayyid ʿUthman's introduction to the work consisted of a brief enumeration of seven points: a warning against erroneous knowledge and scholars; a warning against erroneous innovations (*bidʿas*); a warning against the wrong interpretation of the Qur'an by adherents of these innovations (*ahl al-bidʿa*); the prohibition of claiming *ijtihad*; the necessity of fighting the *ahl al-bidʿa*; the permissibility of concealing the opinions of the *ahl al-bidʿa*; and finally, the point that God would reward people who liked to make known the truth and to prevent falsehood (pp. 2–6). Sayyid ʿUthman then stated that all these points were applicable to the three people who had spread their ideas through a journal in which it could be read that

> they allow forbidden matters, like the eating of meat of whatever has been strangled and beaten to death, the drinking of intoxicating drinks other than those bearing the name 'wine' (*khamr*); they declare various kinds of alcohol ritually pure; they allow the wearing of the hat and other dress items of the Europeans; and they allow the interpretation of the Qur'an by means of reason; they claim to possess *ijtihad*; and they belittle the famous *imams* and insult those who follow them and compare those followers with Jews and Christians who take their bishops and monks as masters without giving heed to God (pp. 6–7).

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After this list of objections against al-*Manar*, Sayyid ʿUthman included the text of a long poem, entitled *al-Raʾiyya al-sughra* (pp. 7–30). This 'Small poem ending in the letter *raʾ*,' as its title translates, was composed by Yusuf al-Nabhani who, as we have seen, had an international reputation for opposing the Cairene reformists. Al-Nabhani's poem consisted of six parts. The first part (pp. 9–11) was a laudation of the Qurʾan, the Sunna and the four *imams*. The second part (pp. 11–18) described Jamal al-Din al-Afghani and other individuals who approved of unlawful innovations (*ahl al-bidʿa*) and claimed to possess *ijtihad*. This person bore his name Jamal al-Din ('Ornament of Religion') despite his appalling deeds. To the group as a whole the following Qurʾanic verses were applicable: 'And when they are told: 'Do not spread evil in the land', they say: 'we are only doing well.' It is they who do evil, but they are unaware of it' (Qurʾan 2: 11–12). In the third part of the poem (pp. 18–22) mention was made of Muhammad ʿAbduh, who had propagated many false teachings (*bidʿas*) and who was obeying Satan even more than his master al-Afghani. The fourth part (pp. 23–27) described Rashid Rida who spread their false teachings around the world through the journal *al-Manar*. Part five (pp. 28–29) underlined that the Wahhabis followed Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Wahhab, who followed the errors of Ibn Taymiyya. At the end of the poem, al-Nabhani closed with praise for the Prophet Muhammad, the most important mediator between God and men (pp. 29–30).

After the poem, Sayyid ʿUthman concluded his *Luzum al-hidhar* by thanking al-Nabhani for this sample of eloquence and expressed his approval for the condemnation of the three reformists (pp. 30–33).

The second work in which Sayyid ʿUthman attacked the reformists was also mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* and bore the full title *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin ʿala ijtinab al-bidaʿ fi l-din*, 'Help for those who seek guidance in avoiding innovations in religion.'[43] The book was published in Arabic in Batavia by the al-Mubaraka Press at the beginning of 1911. I do not know anything of this press and perhaps Sayyid ʿUthman did not publish the book through his own press because the book was rather long and it might have been difficult for him to produce this in addition to his other occupations. As its title indicates, the book was meant to prevent the believers from deviating from the right path, and elaborated on a number of deviant Muslim sects. The book is couched in very general terms and does not have specific references to historical circumstances, but it is clear that Sayyid ʿUthman used it to link up with contemporary debates.

43 This work should not be confused with another work from 1888 with the comparable title *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin ʿala fahm al-din*, see Chapter Four.

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A specific sect that Sayyid ʿUthman dealt with were the Rafidis,[44] who he characterized as the most despicable innovators and who had declared some of the Companions of the Prophet to be unbelievers (pp. 20–25). Although he did not mention it explicitly, it is obvious that Sayyid ʿUthman is referring to a debate about whether or not it was permitted to curse Muʿawiyya, the first Umayyad Caliph after the four Rightly Guided Caliphs (661–680). Because Muʿawiyya had opposed ʿAli, he was utterly despised by the Shiʿis, but he was also controversial among the Sunnis: some regarded him as a Companion of the Prophet, while others – in line with the Shiʿis – cursed him for the way he had treated the generally respected ʿAli. This issue had been dealt with in *al-Manar*, and a book in 1908 by a Singaporean Sayyid Muhammad ibn ʿAqil, had declared the cursing of Muʿawiyya permitted, while Sayyid ʿUthman thought this was forbidden.[45] As we have seen above, the *Qamar al-zaman* also alluded to this debate as the 'stories of wars between the Banu Hashim and the Banu Umayya' (stanzas 173–174).

Another group that Sayyid ʿUthman attacked in his book were the Wahhabis. This group explained the Qur'an according to their personal opinion (*raʾy*); they had lowered the position of the Prophet and discouraged devotion towards him, and even burnt copies of the *Dalaʾil al-khayrat*; they allowed unqualified persons to perform *ijtihad*; they forbade the pilgrimage to the grave of the Prophet and the graves of saints; they rejected the Prophetic miracles and the miracles of the saints; and they denied the Heavenly Journey of the Prophet (*miʿraj*) (pp. 26–57). Although the Cairene reformists were not mentioned here explicitly, it is obvious that Sayyid ʿUthman used the term Wahhabis here to denote them.

In the final sections of his book (pp. 102–112), Sayyid ʿUthman called upon the believers to abandon the *bidʿas*, like those of the Rafidis and the Wahhabis, and to follow the trustworthy scholars of the *ahl al-sunna wa-l-jamaʿa*.[46]

The third booklet attacking these sects mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 176) bore the Arabic title *Salamat al-Muslimin min ibtidaʿ fi l-din*, 'The protecting of the Muslims against the innovating of religion.' It was a small booklet published in January 1911 in Malay. Throughout this booklet, reference was made to the *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin* for more details and the *Salamat al-Mus-*

44 The Rafidis were a sub branch of the Shiʿa, see E.I. (2), viii, 386–389, s.v. al-Rafida.

45 See for this debate and the book by Ibn ʿAqil and Sayyid ʿUthman's reaction, the pioneering article by Ende, 'Schiitische Tendenzen.' Roff, 'Murder,' provides the Singaporean context to this debate.

46 In this passage, Sayyid ʿUthman asked the reader for clemency for his poor command of Arabic (*qillat maʿrifati bi-l-ʿulum al-ʿarabiyya wa-alatiha*), which was one of the reproaches Rida had made him.

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*limin* can be regarded as a popular abridgement in Malay of this bigger Arabic book, addressing an indigenous audience. The *Salamat al-Muslimin* in itself did not offer any new insights, but is noteworthy, because the work forms an example of how the debate with *al-Manar* was communicated to the common believers in the Netherlands East Indies. Sayyid ʿUthman ended the booklet by mentioning that he had made a poster with a schematic overview (*jadwal*) of the contents of his *Iʿanat al-mustarshidin*, entitled *Tuhfat al-nazirin*, 'The gift to those who see,' which he claimed, was very popular and which hung in frames on the walls of many houses and mosques. Through this poster people could see the Rafidi and Wahhabi errors for themselves.[47]

In addition to these three works, Sayyid ʿUthman also wrote other works that must be understood against the background of the attacks made on him. An example of such a work was a book entitled *Saʿadat al-anam bi-tamassuk bi-din al-Islam*, 'The happiness for mankind through adherence to the religion of Islam.' This book was printed in June 1911 in Cairo, although the writing was completed as early as July 1908 (pp. 174–175). Interestingly, it was mentioned that the book had received support from three scholars from al-Azhar in Cairo.[48] The fact that it was published in Cairo shows that Sayyid ʿUthman intended to reach an international audience.

The content of the work is, in the words of the language corrector in the Cairene printing office:

> a book in which the author follows the most obvious way to establish the religious dogmas and rejects the mistakes the deviating heretics (*ahl al-ilhad min al-zaʾighin*) adhere to, so that there is not a shadow of doubt left for the reader. Moreover, he shows the obstinacy of the slanderers and he declares them with certainty to be erroneous and misleading. This book is appropriate for distribution, in particular among those who are versed in contemporary sciences and who are in touch with adherents of foreign religions (p. 175).

The book is of a general nature, dealing with traditional issues, like the superiority of Islam and the conventional parts of Muslim dogma, including the belief in the angels, the belief in the revealed scriptures, and the believe in the Prophets, without giving many historical clues. An interesting passage occurs

47 I have not found this poster among the Leiden collection.

48 Muhammad al-Najdi al-Sharqawi, Muhammad Jadd al-Sharqawi and Ibrahim Hasan al-Shafiʿi (p. 176). On the title page it is mentioned that the printing was taken care of by his pupil ʿAli ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Habshi.

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in a chapter dealing with the truth of Islam. In order to prove this, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that a number of '*ulama*' and philosophers in New York had decided to start proselytizing Islam in America. A French religious scholar in Paris had also propagated the idea to the French government that it would be politically advantageous to 'protect' Islam in North Africa.[49] This section ended with statistics taken from various newspapers (*Makarim al-akhlaq* and *al-Ittihad*) showing the overwhelming number of converts to Islam throughout the world (pp. 34–35). Large parts of the work deal with the relationship between Islam and Christianity in a conventional Islamic way, discussing topics like the falsifications in the Jewish and Christian revealed scriptures in contrast to the uncorrupted nature of the Qur'an (pp. 88–100) and the wrong views about the divinity of Jesus that the Christians adhere to (pp. 108–117). Such issues might suggest that the book was written to demonstrate that Sayyid ʿUthman was aware of the superior position of Islam versus Christianity, in order to counterbalance accusations that he was too close to the Dutch Christian ruler.

Although the book is hardly polemical, it seems likely that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote it to counterbalance the international critique of him, and that for this reason he published it in Cairo. With this book he wanted to demonstrate that he was a solid Muslim scholar who was also aware of modern developments, and that his works could not be neglected.

## 5 More Exchanges between Rashid Rida and Sayyid ʿUthman

Although the comments of Rashid Rida on Sayyid ʿUthman and his work were rather devastating, this did not prevent the readership of al-*Manar* in the Netherlands East Indies consulting his works and, consequently, from asking Rida for his opinions about them. This becomes clear from a long article in *al-Manar* in the issue of 29 April 1911 in which Sayyid ʿUthman was discussed again. The article started with a request from an Arab in Singapore by the name of Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman al-ʿAttas to Rida to give his opinion on a *fatwa* issued by Sayyid ʿUthman, which was quoted in its entirety. Sayyid ʿUthman had given this *fatwa* at the request of a number of Muslims from Singapore, and it dealt with the question of whether or not the commemoration of the night in the middle of the month of Shaʿban and the recitation of Surat Yasin (Qur'an 36) on this night were allowed.[50] According to Sayyid ʿUthman, this

49 The word used here is *himaya*, in French 'Protectorat.'

50 For this practice in colonial Java, see G.F. Pijper, '*Lailat nisf min Shaʿban*.' Sayyid ʿUthman, *Maslak al-akhyar*, 77–80 includes a prayer for this occasion.

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practice was allowed on the basis of Sura 44: 3–4, the passage of the Qur'an that refers to 'a blessed night'(*layla mubaraka*), which, according to a number of reliable authorities, refered to the night in the middle of the month of Sha'ban. Moreover, the permissibility of this practice was also confirmed by a number of Prophetic traditions on the virtues of the month of Sha'ban and the reading of Surat Yasin during this time.

Before coming to his own opinion, Rida painted a devastating picture of the traditional *'ulama'*, who held Islam in their grip through the principle of *taqlid*. These *'ulama'* had distracted the attention of the Muslim masses from the Qur'an, the Sunna, and the *imam-mujtahids* in jurisprudence, and had led them to incompetent scholars who lacked a thorough methodology and a proper academic vocabulary, for instance in the science of Hadith. These scholars claimed that they taught and issued *fatwas* by following their great predecessors, while in reality they were opposing them. Amongst those scholars in Southeast Asia was Shaykh 'Uthman ibn 'Abd Alah ibn 'Aqil, who made use of a great number of books that were unreliable and which were not suitable for basing a *fatwa* on. Although he claimed to be an adherent of the Shafi'i school of Law, Sayyid 'Uthman did not follow the principles of *fatwa*-issuing developed by Ibn Hajar. Indeed, taken together, Sayyid 'Uthman's *fatwas* and the writings in which he gave *fatwas* should be regarded as opposing the Qur'an and the Sunna.

After this introductory comment, Rida came to the *fatwa* itself. After a thorough investigation of the relevant Prophetic traditions and Muslim authorities, Rida concluded that there was no textual basis for the practices performed on this night and that the textual proofs that Sayyid 'Uthman gave were invalid, 'which is caused by his incompetence in Hadith.' Had he been living in a country with an Islamic government, Sayyid 'Uthman would have been forbidden from issuing *fatwas*, 'but his fame and his power rest upon his dependence on a non-Islamic government in a country where there are no *'ulama'*, nor anyone to correct him.'[51]

This and possibly other attacks will have stimulated Sayyid 'Uthman once more to react to his reformist opponents, this time in September 1911, in an Arabic brochure entitled *Tariq al-salama min al-khusran wa-l-nadama*, 'The way of safety from decline and regret.'[52] This brochure is interesting because it addresses the alleged motives of his opponents, thus showing some stereotypes surrounding the Cairene reformists. In the very conventional in-

51 *al-Manar* Vol. 14:4 (29 April 1911): 250–257.

52 The copy I have used comes from the legacy of Rida and was made available to me by Amr Riyad.

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troduction Sayyid ʿUthman warned against the sins of his opponents (pp. 2–4). In section two (pp. 5–12), Sayyid ʿUthman became more specific about these sins. What formed the origin of the unbelief in his age was Free Masonry (*al-masuniyya*) or, as it was called in the language of the Malays (*jawa*), 'the House of the Devil' (*Ruma Setan*), which was founded by a Christian sect with the aim of leading people to unbelief. Among its members were Jamal al-Din al-Afghani, his pupil Muhammad ʿAbduh, and the latter's pupil the Shaykh *al-Manar*. These three individuals had been refuted by Yusuf al-Nabhani. According to him, and according to ʿAbd al-Hamid Kudus al-Makki (1863–1915),[53] the Shaykh *al-Manar* no longer performed his prayers and belonged to the Free Masonry; he no longer followed the Islamic food prescriptions; he allowed the wearing of a hat; and he denied that the sun had bowed for Allah, thus rejecting the Hadith and the Qur'an,[54] which both testified to this event. On a more conceptual note, Sayyid ʿUthman continued that these three devils and their followers had replaced the four established schools of Law with one single *madhhab*. This new school aimed to reach legal opinions through *ijtihad* by going back directly to the Qur'an and the Sunna in order to follow their own desires, while rejecting the established schools of Law of the four *imams* and their followers (*muqallidun*). Because this new school of Law cursed the Companions, Sayyid ʿUthman characterized it as the Rafidi *madhhab* and, because they also denied the miracles of the Prophet Muhammad (*muʿjizat*) and those of the saints (*karamat*), he labelled them as a Wahhabi *madhhab*. Yet another sin was that the imitation of foreigners was approved of with regard to dress, behaviour, customs and education. This latter objection is phrased as follows:

> The sending to a Christian school of our children, or sending them to their country for education, even if it is for arithmetic or languages, at the end of the day will result in unbelief and abhorrence of the Almighty God.

Unsurprisingly, the booklet ended in a call to his readers to stay away from these individuals (pp. 13–14).

53 This person originated from Java and was a preacher and teacher in the Masjid al-Haram in Mecca at the end of the nineteenth century, see ʿAbd al-Jabbar, *Siyar wa-tarajim*, 178–181. Leiden University has a copy of his book *al-Anwar al-saniyya* from 1896, with a personal dedication from him to Sayyid ʿUthman, which testifies to the personal links between ʿAbd al-Hamid and Sayyid ʿUthman. I thank my former student Sunarwoto for this reference.

54 See Qur'an 22: 18. The issue was dealt with in *al-Manar* in September 1909.

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Whether or not Rida ever read this brochure is unclear, but people continued to approach him about Sayyid ʿUthman, as becomes clear from an article in *al-Manar* later that year. Under the heading 'The situation of the Muslims in Java and the reforms,' the article started with an extensive letter from Muhammad ibn Hashim from the Arabic *madrasa* in Palembang. He had noticed that many Arab children were no longer able to understand Arabic, while he had also observed that the Europeans had excellent results in teaching their language and religious beliefs among indigenous children. For this reason, he had opened a modern school in which he taught, in addition to Arabic, geography, Islamic history, Islamic doctrines and some English as well.[55] When teaching Arabic, Muhammad ibn Hashim continued, they followed the American Berlitz method, which was based on the perceptions and experiences of the pupil and which yielded incredibly good results. Muhammad ibn Hashim concluded by mentioning that he had met with a lot of resistance from his fellow Arabs, but that he was determined to continue with his reform efforts.

In his comments on this letter, Rida praised Muhammad ibn Hashim as one of the most intelligent young men from the Hadramis in the archipelago, and as someone who was willing to forsake the *shaykhs* of his race. Although Rida was reluctant to mention the names of these 'evildoers' (*mufsidun*), he thought the person who was most opposed to the reform was the very old Sayyid ʿUthman, whom Rida mistakenly takes for Muhammad ibn Hashim's uncle. Rida had received a great many letters about Dutch injustice in the Netherlands East Indies and the maltreatment of the Arabs, and all these letters pointed towards Sayyid ʿUthman as a supporter of the Dutch administration, which used him as a spy and as an advisor. But what made it necessary for Rida to reveal his name was:

> the booklets we have seen, which he had printed and spread among the population, contain discouragement for the reform (*islah*) and the reformers; mistakes and confusion in his religious judgements; his prohibition of the sciences and the arts in an ordered way, as well as his objection that the establishment of structured *madrasas* and the teaching of the mathematical and natural sciences, were an imitation of the Europeans, and therefore absolutely forbidden according to his ignorant way of legal reasoning. Likewise, he forbade the teaching of Arabic and Islamic legal sciences by a novel method and a sound form, although this was common practice in Egypt, Istanbul and other places.

55 This was given by a graduate of the Singapore Teachers College, called ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Qudsi.

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Moreover, this prohibition on imitation of the Europeans had not prevented him from accepting a decoration from the Dutch government for his service and expertise. The person who had stimulated ʿUthman ibn ʿAqil to deceive the Muslims and to withhold them from progress was the Dutchman Dr. Snouck Hurgronje, who had pretended a conversion to Islam and had resided in Mecca under the name ʿAbd al-Ghaffar, until his real identity was revealed and he had to leave. Hereafter, Snouck Hurgronje was appointed the government's Advisor for Muslim Affairs and Sayyid ʿUthman assisted him in obstructing the progress of Muslims and harassing the Arabs, for which he received a salary from the Dutch. In conclusion, Rida lamented the activities of this evildoer and the likes of him who prevented the progress of the Hadramis, but expressed his joy about the actions of Muhammad ibn Hashim.[56]

This was the last time Rida would discuss Sayyid ʿUthman during the latter's lifetime. At that time, Sayyid ʿUthman was already almost ninety years of age and perhaps Rida thought that the role of Sayyid ʿUthman was over.

## 6 Persistent Warnings against the Reformists in the Netherlands East Indies

Despite his advanced age, the spread of modernist ideas continued to bother Sayyid ʿUthman, as is clear from the following account. In Palembang in January 1912 a Malay poster containing 'Compulsory Advice' (*Nasihat yang wajib*) was distributed. In it, Sayyid ʿUthman rejected the plans of his grandson Muhammad ibn Hashim to establish a new school to study Dutch together with Arabic. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, this plan would harm the religion of Islam, because its teachers would claim that this modern school had better results than the traditional education and because in the school a modern dress code would be followed. This was completely wrong for four reasons. Firstly, there was the Prophetic tradition 'Whosoever imitates a group, belongs to them;' secondly, these people would oppose the Tradition 'Whosoever sympathizes with a group, will be gathered with them;' thirdly, based on these Traditions the new style of dress, behaviour and teaching should be rejected; and fourthly, the *ʿulama'* had said that supporters of these new matters should fear being excluded from Islam. Based on these points, Sayyid ʿUthman gave two comments: 1) one should stay away from the above mentioned matters; and 2) one should study according to the method that was practiced by the ʿAlawi *sayyids*. This would lead to well-being in this world and the Hereafter and

56 *al-Manar* Vol. 14:10 (23 September 1911): 761–766, quote on p. 766.

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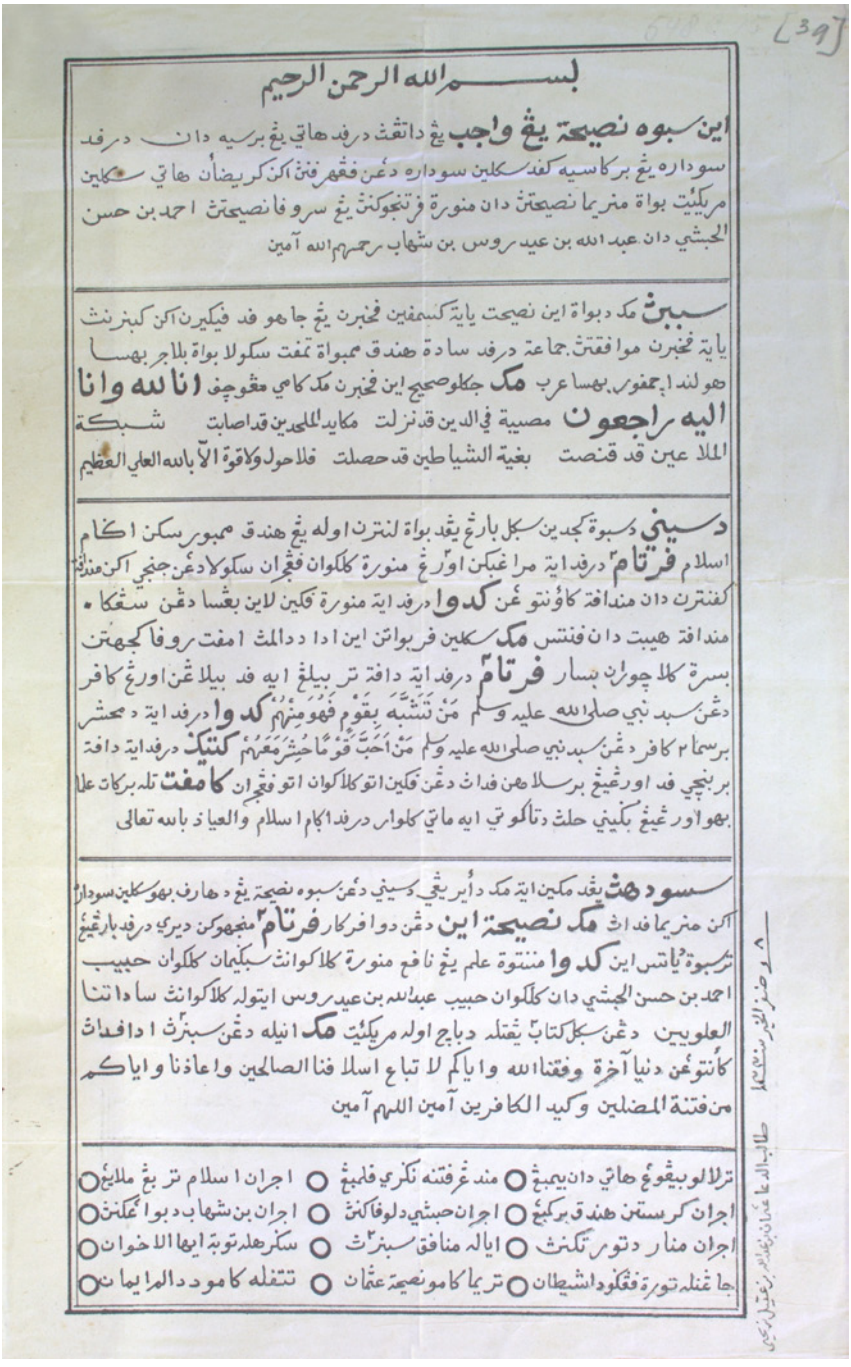


FIGURE 8 *Poster to refute the reformists in Palembang*
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secure the avoidance of the unbelievers. In a concluding poem Sayyid ʿUthman explained that this awful discord (*fitna*) in Palembang has arisen, because *al-Manar* had been disseminated there. Its teaching, however, was hypocritical (*munafiq*) and one should not follow this temptation of the Devil. On the contrary, one should follow the Advice of ʿUthman, in order to keep one's faith.[57]

This poster provoked a response from Sayyid Jaʿfar ibn Shaykh al-Saqqaf and Sayyid Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Munawwar, the two *sayyids* from Palembang to whom Sayyid ʿUthman had turned for help in order to correct his grandson in 1908. In a letter to Sayyid ʿUthman, dated 5 March 1912, the two *sayyids* mentioned that they had taken good notice of all of Sayyid ʿUthman's objections, also by studying some of his booklets on the issue. Concerning the necessity of the study of Arabic they fully agreed with Sayyid ʿUthman, since this was the language of the Qur'an and of religion. However, the study of English was considered to be useful for contemporary matters. Indeed, the Prophet himself had also stimulated Greek wisdom and the search for knowledge as far as China.[58] Moreover, it was known from the sound Traditions that the Prophet had used Ethiopian and Persian words. If children were sent to Christian schools where religious education was also given, then they agreed with the objections of Sayyid ʿUthman. However, the two *sayyids* did not have any objection to European dress, because the Prophet himself had also adopted dress items from other peoples, like the Byzantines.[59] In sum, they considered the methods of instruction implemented by the Europeans to be effective and successful and they did not see a reason why these should be forbidden or why the new school should be opposed.[60] From this reaction by these two prominent Arabs it is clear that Sayyid ʿUthman was highly respected, but at the same time increasingly losing support for his view on education.

In July 1912, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote another admonition warning against the ideas of the Shaykh *al-Manar*, entitled *Fard al-nasiha*, 'The duty to give advice.' This brief Malay text explained again the centrality of the idea of admonition in Islam, by quoting the Prophetic tradition 'Religion is [giving] advice' (*al-din al-nasiha*), while he also stressed that it was a Muslim's duty to give advice to

57 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Collection of posters,' no. 39. The poster is dated by hand, 28 January 1912.

58 This remark referred to the well-known Prophetic tradition 'Seek knowledge, even as far as in China.'

59 This argument was clearly taken from *al-Manar* and repeated in November 1911 issue of the Malay reformist journal from Padang, *al-Munir*, see Kaptein, 'Southeast Asian debates,' 185–187.

60 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Correspondence with *sayyids* in Palembang,' 14–17.

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another Muslim. Moreover, he explained that a Muslim should be ready to accept this advice and that those who were not ready to do so would be punished (pp. 5–10).

After these general considerations, Sayyid ʿUthman became more specific. First he quoted the Prophetic tradition 'I fear for you that there will be someone worse than the Devil (*Dajjal*),' and he continued that the Prophet meant deceptive *imams*, among whom the Shaykh *al-Manar* stood out, as has been explained by Yusuf al-Nabhani in his *al-Raʾiyya al-sughra* and by ʿAbd al-Hamid Kudus and other scholars. Next, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned a long list of sins propagated by Rida and committed by some of his followers: they were members of the Free Masonry; they were Christians; they socialized with English clergymen (*paderi-paderi Ingris*); they did not perform the *salat*; they denied the Prophetic tradition about the bowing of the sun; they considered the drinking of gin permitted; they disregarded the prohibition of interest; they allowed the wearing of a necktie and a hat; they permitted eating the meat of animals that had been beaten to death; they drank palm wine (*arak*); they interpreted the Qur'an according to their own whims; they were very clever in presenting the evil as truth; and they required people to study English, claiming that through this one could understand the meaning of the Qur'an. However, the many readers of *al-Manar* should know that all this was part of the fear the Prophet expressed in his previously mentioned saying (pp. 11–19). In a nutshell, we see here, yet again Sayyid ʿUthman's objections to the reformists; this time, however, in Malay in order to inform and warn the native population.

At the end of the same year Sayyid ʿUthman reported on the issue in a personal letter, dated 4 November 1912, to Snouck Hurgronje in Leiden. In this letter he complained to Snouck that there were many followers of al-*Manar* in Java. These persons adhered to the Wahhabi and the Rafidi *madhhab* and their leader was Rashid Rida who had repeatedly insulted Sayyid ʿUthman and the Dutch government. In Palembang this *madhhab* was introduced by Jaʿfar ibn al-Saqqaf, the Captain of the Arabs, and by his own grandson, Muhammad ibn Hashim. When Sayyid ʿUthman had discouraged the people of Palembang from embracing the new *madhhab*, hostility arose and a complaint against Sayyid ʿUthman was made that he had forbidden the school (*sekola*) and that he was misleading the people of Palembang. This Jaʿfar had caused a lot of harm to the people of Palembang; indeed, around 70 Arabs had emigrated to Pekalongan, Surabaya and Batavia. Moreover, this person had spread false rumours about Sayyid ʿUthman that he had been dismissed from his post and that he had been reprimanded by the Resident of Batavia. However, to the

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amazement of Sayyid ʻUthman, this Jaʻfar has not been removed from his function.[61]

This letter was written when Sayyid ʻUthman was already over 90 years of age and it shows that he was really concerned with the growing influence of the Egyptian reformists.

## 7 Conclusion

From the beginning of the twentieth century onwards, new ideas on Islam from the Egyptian reformists were introduced and discussed in the Netherlands East Indies. As the leading scholar in the Indies, Sayyid ʻUthman participated in these discussions and reacted with a number of very conventional and traditional writings in which he attacked the ideas of the *al-Manar* group.

Although his contributions added little new to the debate, Sayyid ʻUthman caught the attention of Rida in his journal *al-Manar*, not least because people in the Netherlands East Indies asked Rida's opinion about a number of his writings. On the whole, Rida was extremely critical of the scholarship of Sayyid ʻUthman and advised the Muslims of the Netherlands East Indies not to take heed of him and his publications any longer. In response to these writings of Rida, Sayyid ʻUthman wrote yet more counter booklets in Arabic and Malay. Notably, in these writings he often referred to the Middle Eastern scholar Yusuf al-Nabhani, who was a well-known champion of traditionalist Islam at the time. Another notable point is that, despite his advanced age, Sayyid ʻUthman had not lost his combativeness and his persistence in rejecting the thought of the Cairene reformists.

The episodes dealt with in this chapter took place after Snouck Hurgronje was replaced as Advisor for Native Affairs by Hazeu and it is clear that, on the whole, the cooperation between Sayyid ʻUthman and Hazeu was much less intense than it had been between Sayyid ʻUthman and Snouck. The next chapter will deal mainly with Sayyid ʻUthman's writings, but one particular affair will shed some light on Hazeu's perception of Sayyid ʻUthman.

61 Sayyid ʻUthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje.'

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CHAPTER 7

# Constant Guidance for the Muslim Community (1891–1912)

## 1 Introduction

After Sayyid ʿUthman entered the service of the colonial administration, many of his activities were directly related to colonial policies, especially in the initial period of his advisorship, when he worked closely with C. Snouck Hurgronje. In Chapter Four I focused on the most relevant of these policy oriented activities, while in Chapters Five and Six I dealt with Sayyid ʿUthman's involvement with the occurrence of Pan-Islamic sympathies and the rise of Muslim modernism in the Netherlands East Indies, respectively. In addition, and simultaneously to all this, Sayyid ʿUthman remained active in terms of providing guidance to the community in religious matters.

In order to paint a complete picture of the life and work of Sayyid ʿUthman, the present chapter will examine those of his activities that did not have an obvious link with the political and intellectual developments dealt with in Chapters Four, Five and Six. These activities relate to the period from 1891 until 1912. The most important sources for this chapter are Sayyid ʿUthman's own writings. Because he produced these writings alongside the debates and polemics dealt with in the previous chapters, this chapter deviates from the chronological order followed in this book thus far. This chapter illustrates the kinds of topics that Sayyid ʿUthman considered to be of importance for the development of religious life in the Netherlands East Indies and those issues that emerged from the community.

## 2 Controversies

In addition to the major polemics dealt with in the previous chapters, which took place in a more public sphere, Sayyid ʿUthman was occasionally involved in controversies of a more religious nature and which did not directly touch upon policy issues. I will deal with a number of these in the following section.

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### *The Devil of Bandung*

The first of these controversies was also mentioned in the *Qamar al-zaman*, which related that, in 1903, a fierce polemic developed between Sayyid ʿUthman and Haji Hasan Mustafa (1852–1930) from Bandung.[1] The career of Haji Hasan, like that of Sayyid ʿUthman, was greatly influenced and determined by Snouck Hurgronje. Although this controversy fell within the period that Snouck was in the Indies, he remained neutral, apparently not wanting to jeopardize his relationship with either man. Snouck had become acquainted with Haji Hasan Mustafa, when both men stayed in Mecca.[2] During the period November 1889 to January 1893, Haji Hasan also accompanied Snouck on his travels in Java,[3] which Snouck reported on regularly in the daily *De Locomotief*, under the title '*Brieven van een wedono-pensioen*' (Letters from a retired *wedono*). In 1892, Haji Hasan was appointed as Chief *penghulu* in Kota Raja, Aceh, on the advice of Snouck. However, the appointment was not a successful one as Haji Hasan was severely homesick for his native land, the Priangan in West Java. From 1895 onwards, he held the same function in Bandung until he was honourably discharged in 1918. Educated in a traditional religious boarding school (*pesantren*) and in Mecca, Haji Hasan was well-versed in the traditional Islamic sciences, but had much wider interests: he worked on an ethnographical description of the Sundanese people, which he published, in Sundanese, in 1913.[4] Moreover, Haji Hasan occupied himself by composing mystical poetry in the Sundanese language.[5]

It is perhaps unsurprising that Sayyid ʿUthman's polemics against Haji Hasan were triggered by the latter's mystical poetry and ideas. This is apparent from a handwritten text, in Arabic, by Haji Hasan from 1902, entitled *Injaz al-waʿd fi itfaʾ al-raʿd*, 'The fulfillment of the promise dealing with the extinction of the thunder.' In this text, Haji Hasan documented the attacks on him, as well as his responses to them, often providing handwritten copies of original documents. The first document in the text is an attack on him in the Egyptian

1 See also Laffan, *The makings*, 168–170.

2 In Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 131, 179 Snouck mentioned that he had heard him speak positively of Europeans.

3 Van Ronkel, 'Aanteekeningen.'

4 Hasan Mustafa, 'Letter to Snouck' (dated 12 February 1911), mentioned that he was going to write this book. In 1946, R.A. Kern published a Dutch translation of this work, entitled *Over de gewoonten en gebruiken der Soendaneezen*. The original Sundanese book from 1913 can be understood as a foreshadowing of later *adat* literature.

5 Kern, 'Voorbericht.' Jahroni, 'Haji Mustafa.'

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newspaper *Misbah al-Sharq* from 29 November 1902.[6] This article bears the title 'Complaint from Muslims' and was basically a letter to the editor from 'a prominent Muslim in the lands of the Jawa.'[7] The author of this letter stated that the government of the Netherlands East Indies was suppressing its Muslim population and was making efforts to Christianize them with the help of Haji Hasan, who was urging the Muslim people of Bandung and its surrounding villages to abandon the prescriptions of the Qur'an and the Sunna, while '[…] spreading the teaching that the Holy Essence has descended in all things' (*wa-yu'linu i'tiqadahu bi-hulul al-dhat al-muqaddas fi l-ashya'*). The article also mentioned that Haji Hasan was urged to do this by the influential government advisor C. Snouck Hurgronje who had feigned being a Muslim (*idda'a al-Islam*) and who used the Muslim name 'Abd al-Ghaffar. Furthermore Haji Hasan's teachings were accused of preparing the way for Christian missionaries. When the Muslims from the region complained to the authorities about the activities of Haji Hasan, their concerns were not taken seriously. Consequently, the people of Bandung addressed Sayyid 'Uthman with a request to stop Haji Hasan; however, according to this newspaper report, he had responded that he could do little in this regard as Haji Hasan had the full support of the Dutch government.[8]

Although this newspaper article hinted at the relative powerlessness of Sayyid 'Uthman in this case, as was to be expected, he wrote a refutation of the ideas of Haji Hasan, entitled *al-Radd 'ala Shaytan Bandung fi ithbat al-Hayy al-Qayyum*, 'The refutation of the Devil of Bandung for the sake of the confirmation of the Living Eternal.'[9] As far as I know, Sayyid 'Uthman never published this text, but he sent it directly to his opponent in Bandung. Haji Hasan confirmed receipt of this critique on 20 December 1902 and it has been preserved as part of Haji Hasan's *Injaz al-wa'd*. This writing is difficult to follow because it is preserved in the form of a dialogue with incomprehensible references. However, it is clear that Sayyid 'Uthman reproached Haji Hasan for deviating from the established authorities of the tradition, such as al-Ghazali, and accused him of unbelief and atheism.[10] Subsequently, Sayyid 'Uthman contacted Haji

6 Hasan Mustafa, *Injaz al-wa'd*, fols. 2b-4a.The original press cutting has been attached in fols. 26b-29a.

7 It is unknown me who this was, but he undoubtedly belonged to the anti-colonial, pro-Pan-Islamist group that was also opposing Sayyid 'Uthman, see Chapter Five.

8 Snouck also rendered the gist of this newspaper article in a piece of advice to the Governor General, albeit omitting the details referring to his own conversion, see Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 1660.

9 *al-Hayy* and *al-Qayyum* are two of the 99 beautiful names of God.

10 Hasan Mustafa, *Injaz al-wa'd*, fols. 30b-34b.

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Hasan again in a letter of 12 February 1903, asking him to send his writings because Sayyid ʿUthman had heard rumours about them and he wanted to judge them and, possibly, give his approval.[11] Two days later, Haji Hasan wrote back to Sayyid ʿUthman that the brochures he had written did not deal with religion and that it was not clear which text Sayyid ʿUthman had in mind. Moreover, he indicated that he was not in need of support and that he did not want a polemic.[12]

Despite these words, Sayyid ʿUthman did write a polemic work against Haji Hasan's ideas. This work is entitled *Sawn al-din ʿan nazaghat al-mudillin*, 'The protection of religion against the incitements of those who mislead.' The work was published in June 1903 and clarified Sayyid ʿUthman's objections to the pantheistic ideas of Haji Hasan. The book was in Arabic, but a Malay, a Javanese and a Sundanese rendering were given in the margin, demonstrating Sayyid ʿUthman's desire to reach a broad audience, including the native Sundanese population of West Java. In the short introduction he explained, simply, that he had seen a number of writings on the teachings of the so-called *Ilmu peyakinan*, 'The true knowledge,' which contained so many violations of Islam that its followers were apostates. Sayyid ʿUthman summarized how these writings opposed the Qur'an specifically and Islam in general in a series of points. The first point he made stated that 'they say that Almighty God is like an egg,' the egg being a metaphor for a pantheistic universe with God as its kernel. Secondly, the obligations to perform the ritual prayer and to fast were abandoned. Thirdly, the concepts of Heaven and Hell were said to be nonsense. Fourthly, the Qur'an was explained according to the mystical teachings of the *Ilmu peyakinan*; and, finally, their teachings were mixed with Qur'anic verses and mystical ideas. Sayyid ʿUthman had written his book to refute these teachings and he considered anyone who followed or taught even one of these points to be an apostate of Islam (p. ii).

The book goes on to elaborate these points, starting with the teaching of pantheistic monism, which was characterized so concisely in the first point. The writers of the brochures of this *Ilmu peyakinan* mixed Qur'anic texts and Prophetic sayings with mystical ideas and they confused divine attributes with names of Prophets. They no longer adhered to the teaching of the unity of God (*tawhid*) and they made the attributes of the One who must be worshipped (*sifat al-maʿbud*) equal to the attributes of the worshipper (*sifat al-ʿabid*). In these writings they showed atheism (*ilhad*) and apostasy (*irtidad*) and omitted the ritual obligations; they regarded the prosperity of rich people in this life as

11 Ibid., fol. 35a.

12 Ibid., fols. 25b–26a.

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Paradise and hunger as Hell. They carried out active propaganda and only provided their brochures to individuals who intended to join them. When someone became a member, he performed an oath, as if they belonged to the House of the Satan[13] and they regarded themselves as having reached the highest stage (*maqam*) of mystical enlightenment. Sayyid ʿUthman had also received reports that some of their followers were singing the attributes of God and the Sura of Sincerity (*surat al-ikhlas*) accompanied by drums (pp. 1–8). In subsequent parts of the book he explained the conventional Islamic notions about *salat*, faith and the obligation to follow the example of the Prophet (pp. 8–20). In section seven of his *Sawn al-din* Sayyid ʿUthman elaborated on the preconditions that a mystic had to fulfill. These were the mastering of the sciences of the Shariʿa, fear of God, to follow the rules of the Shariʿa, the example of the Prophet, and piety. Anyone who did not comply with these was a freethinker (*zindiq*), a fraud and an apostate (pp. 20–23). Section eight dealt with the consensus among the great scholars of Islam, who had expertise in the esoteric and the exoteric sciences (*al-ʿilm al-zahir wa-l-batin*) and in the Law and in the Truth (*al-shariʿa wa-l-haqiqa*), that it was forbidden to read mystical works with an esoteric meaning, among others, works on the topic of union (*wahda*), the *Hikam* by Ibn ʿAta' Allah (d. 1309)[14] and the *al-Futuhat al-Makkiyya* by Ibn ʿArabi (1165–1240).[15] The reading of these works was only allowed by scholars with the highest qualifications (*ijtihad*) (pp. 23–29). In conclusion, in the final pages of the book Sayyid ʿUthman strongly condemned the followers of the *Ilmu peyakinan* and ended his book by stating that:

> Now likewise, after we saw their brochures, which destroy the religion of Islam, we have written this brochure in order to save them from the destruction of religion and we have named it *Sawn al-din* (pp. 29–35).[16]

Another pertinent document included by Haji Hasan in his *Injaz al-waʿd* was a second letter from Sayyid ʿUthman. On the envelope, postmarked 4 July

13 This is the term Sayyid ʿUthman also used for Free Masonry, see Chapter Six.

14 He is best known for his collection of mystical maxims, called *Hikam*, see E.I. (2), iii, 722–723.

15 He is one of the most famous mystics of Islam and known for his pantheistic thought, see E.I. (2), iii, 707–711.

16 In 1906, the then Ottoman consul in Batavia proposed that Sayyid ʿUthman elaborate on his *Sawn al-din* with a view to the consul translating this into English. Rumours of this proposal had spread and were reported in the periodical *Ikdam* of 18 April 1908 and from there in the Cairene *Liwa.* This report was picked up by G.A.J. Hazeu. This proposal, however, was never carried out, see the letter from Hazeu, 'Letter to Minister of the Colonies.'

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1903, is written in Arabic that it was directed to: 'the Qadi of Bandung, the disgusting, sinister, criminal eminence – may God take his life.' In the letter, Sayyid 'Uthman reproached Haji Hasan for permitting forbidden matters and for not making a distinction between different religions, so that he was no better than an animal.[17] I must assume that this correspondence ended the controversy between Sayyid 'Uthman and Haji Hasan, because I have found no further data relating to the matter. As we have seen Haji Hasan was not interested in a polemic.

A late echo of this controversy can be found in a small brochure by Sayyid 'Uthman directed at religious teachers and entitled *Kelakuan terpuji bagi guru mengaji*, 'Laudable behaviour for the teachers of religion.' It was published in 1906 in Malay. Initially, the booklet elaborates on the differences between good and bad knowledge, along the same lines as we have seen above. A major part of the booklet deals with the love (*mahabba* and *mawadda*) that the Family of the Prophet should receive from other Muslims and the prohibition of treating them disrespectfully (pp. 11–28). In the last section of the brochure Sayyid 'Uthman provides an outline of how a good teacher should behave. In a long list of qualities, he mentions that a good teacher should not teach the mystical path (*tariqa*) to the common believer as this would lead to delusion. Also, he should not teach innovations, like the 'seven grades of Being' (*martabat tujuh*), or *Ilmu peyakinan* (pp. 31–36).

### *Issues Related to the Qur'an*

a The Phonographic Rendering of the Qur'an

The background to this issue was that a *sayyid* had travelled around Java with a phonograph, a new invention at the time, in order to make money with it.[18] This caught the interest of Sayyid 'Uthman and in July 1899 he issued a *fatwa* in Arabic on 'the box that contains devices that can pull out sounds from its proximity to its interior.'[19] Different sounds were stored in this device, including the voice of a person reciting the Qur'an, and the owner of the device could release the voices whenever he wanted. The questioner wanted to know from Sayyid 'Uthman what the legal judgement of the *'ulama'* was about this device and, secondly, whether a Muslim who listened to Qur'anic recital from the device would be rewarded for this. Finally, he wanted to know whether it was

17 Hasan Mustafa, *Injaz al-wa'd*, fols. 36b-38a.

18 Snouck, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 419. Witkam, 'Fatwa's over de fonografie van de Koran,' mentions some technicalities on the phonograph.

19 Sayyid 'Uthman does not use the word phonograph here; later, in his booklet on the subject, he did; see below.

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forbidden to listen to the voice of a foreign woman singing a song or to the sound of frivolous instruments coming from the device.

In his answer Sayyid ʿUthman indicated that everything that God had created had a purpose and God had given man the mental faculty to develop these things. As long as the listener did not listen to frivolities (*lahw*) and did not behave improperly during the listening of the Qurʾanic recital, this was permitted. If these conditions were not met, it was forbidden. With regard to the second question, Sayyid ʿUthman responded that there was no reward for the listener, because it did not concern here the voice of a reciter (*qari*) of the Qurʾan, who followed all the obligatory details of recitation (*tajwid*). In relation to the third issue he mentioned that it was forbidden to listen to the voice of a female singer, because it incited lust, 'like imagining the picture of a foreign woman.'[20]

This *fatwa* provoked reactions and, as on previous occasions, after the initial *fatwa* was issued, Sayyid ʿUthman followed up with a more complete elaboration on the topic. In September 1899, together with his *fatwa*, he published the Arabic booklet *Tulu*ʿ *badr al-ʿilm al-murtafa*ʿ *wa-zuhur najm al-sidq al-muntafa*ʿ *ʿala sihhat jawab hukm al-sawt al-mukhtara*ʿ, 'The rising of the new moon of the venerated knowledge and the appearance of the star of the useful truth about the validity of the answer on the judgement on the invented voice.' In this text, Sayyid ʿUthman addressed an anonymous opponent who had stated that listening to the phonograph was permitted unconditionally and that listening to the reciting of the Qurʾan via the phonograph would be rewarded, because this was precisely the same as listening to the reciting of the Qurʾan by a performer. Consequently, the opponent had declared that it was good practice to make a prostration (*sajda*) upon hearing this. Moreover, he thought that the same rules that applied to a material copy of the Qurʾan (*mushaf*) were valid for its phonographic rendering. Therefore, the performer whose voice was reproduced via the phonograph would also be rewarded, because his recorded performance was identical to the act of a scribe of the Qurʾan. His opponent even declared that a call for prayer produced by a phonograph would be valid (pp. 2–5).

In his lengthy reply, Sayyid ʿUthman took the position that the phonograph was essentially a device for amusement (pp. 5–7). His main point was that the phonograph did not render the Qurʾan accurately from the point of view of the science of Qurʾan recitation (*tilawa*) and, for this reason, Qurʾanic recital via the phonograph was not equal to a live recital. In addition, the rules with regard to the written Qurʾan did not apply to a recorded version of the Qurʾan

20 See for the text of the *fatwa*, Sayyid ʿUthman, *Tulu*ʿ *badr al-ʿilm*, 2–8.

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(pp. 7–20). Consequently, prostration upon hearing the Qur'an from the phonograph was not permitted (pp. 20–21) and the recorded performer would not receive a reward in the same way as a scribe of the Qur'an (pp. 10–12).

Attached to the *Tulu' badr al-'ilm al-murtafa'* was a *fatwa* from the Syrian scholar Husayn al-Jisr, which he had issued following a request from Sayyid 'Uthman.[21] As we have seen in Chapter Five, Husayn al-Jisr had a reputation for his views on modern science and in 1900 he gave his official approval to a number of works by Sayyid 'Uthman, written in the framework of his polemics with the Pan-Islamist oriented Arabs from Batavia. Sayyid 'Uthman had brought the issue of the phonograph to al-Jisr through a friend[22] and this request resulted in a *fatwa* that was originally published in al-Jisr's journal *Tarabulus* and consequently reproduced by Sayyid 'Uthman. According to Husayn al-Jisr, Qur'anic recitation via the phonograph was not permitted, because it could not be guaranteed that the ritual rules that should accompany the recital had been taken into account during the recording. Moreover, the idea that listening to a recording of the Qur'an was equal to a printed version of the Holy Book was not correct. A printed Qur'an was only touched by individuals in a ritually pure state; moreover, the benefits of spreading the Qur'an in print among the poor were great. Furthermore, the rendering of a recital by the phonograph could be incorrect in relation to the science of *tilawa*. Likewise, older scholars had rejected the idea that an echo of a recital of the Qur'an was similar to a proper recital (pp. 1–15).

### b The Translation of the Qur'an

Some years later, Sayyid 'Uthman dealt with another controversial issue related to the Qur'an; namely, the translation of the Qur'an and the use of translations by believers. In Islam, it is generally accepted that it is not possible to translate the Qur'an, because its style is thought to be inimitable. However, as a compromise, it is permitted to render the contents of the Holy Book in another language. However, this is not regarded as a translation, but rather as an approximate rendering of its meaning or as a commentary (*tafsir*). In ritual, the original Arabic text of the Qur'an is used by Muslims throughout the world, independent of their native language.[23]

21 See Chapter Five. Ebert, *Religion und Reform*, 154–155, mentions that it came from Batavia without specifying Sayyid 'Uthman's name.

22 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Islam und Phonograph,' 444.

23 Tibawi, 'Is the Qur'an translatable?'

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The following account explains why Sayyid ʿUthman took up this issue. A person by the name of Bagus Ngarpah,[24] who was the head teacher of the *Madrasa Mambaʾ al-ʿulum* in Solo, had started to produce a Javanese translation of the Qur'an from about the end of 1907. It was printed and published in a series of parts by H.A. Benjamins in Semarang.[25] This translation was published under the sponsorship of the literary circle Waradarma in Solo, which had received a subsidy from the Prime Minister of the Sunan. This funding had given an official character to the translation. At the end of 1908, this translation, or at least the parts of it that had already been published, led to unrest in Solo and, consequently, attracted the attention of the Dutch authorities, as evidenced by an exchange of letters about the affair between the Advisor for Native Affairs, G.A.J. Hazeu, and the Assistant Resident of Solo, Ch.P.J. Blok.

The unrest was caused by protests against the translation by a number of Muslim scholars and some Arabs. These Arabs had reportedly involved Sayyid ʿUthman and rumour had it that Sayyid ʿUthman had sent a letter to the Sunan and his Minister with a request for the prohibition of any further publication of the translation. In a letter of 30 December 1908, Hazeu directed himself to Blok with the message that he should act only if things were to get out of hand and that, if indeed it was the case that Sayyid ʿUthman had approached the Sunan, Blok should make clear that,

> that Arab scholar does this completely as an individual, not at the instigation or at the instruction of others. For, in his enthusiasm, Sayyid ʿUthman is sometimes inclined, in order to get things done his way, to pretend that he speaks on behalf of or in consultation with our administration.[26]

In his reply on 23 January 1909, Blok informed Hazeu that he had discovered that Sayyid ʿUthman had not sent a letter to the Sunan or to the First Minister. Moreover, Blok reported on a public debate on the translation, which had taken place in Solo on 5 December. Thanks to rumours that the debaters would appear as boxers, thousands of people attended, but there had been no rioting. More rumours that Sayyid ʿUthman and a *sayyid* from Singapore would attend, proved to be false. During the meeting, Bagus Ngarpah declared that his translation was a 'commentary' (*tafsir*) and that no ritual ablution was needed prior

24 I thank Moch Nur Ichwan for this identification.

25 There is a copy of part of this translation, Sura 1-Sura 7: 85, at Leiden University.

26 'Strijd te Solo.'

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to its lecture.[27] This letter appeased Hazeu, who replied to Blok in a letter of 4 February:

> My previous writing was primarily inspired by the fear that Sayyid 'Uthman might write protest letters to the Sunan and it might appear as if the Government rejected that translation just as much as he did.[28]

Some months later, Sayyid 'Uthman also discussed this issue in a letter to Snouck Hurgronje. This letter is dated 25 July 1909, and thus originates from the time that Snouck had already returned to Leiden. In this letter Sayyid 'Uthman reported to his former superior that in Solo a native (*Jawa*), by the name of Agus Arpah (sic), had made a translation of the Qur'an in the Jawi language,[29] featuring the Arabic original ('the Qur'an') on the right side of the page and the translation on the left side of the page, so in two adjacent columns. Moreover, this translation had been printed and distributed. According to Sayyid 'Uthman, a Chinese man had bought a copy of the translation and, on reaching the verse 'Fight the polytheists all together […]' (*qatilu al-mushrikina kafatan*) (Q. 9: 36) and its translation *mesti bunuh orang yang semah tepekong sama sekali*, which was translated as 'Kill the people who sacrifice in the [Chinese] temples all together,'[30] he became very angry and threw the translation on the street. When a native saw this they started to quarrel and they decided to ask Sayyid 'Uthman to give a legal opinion on the issue. Sayyid 'Uthman ended his letter to Snouck by saying that, in response, he had written a brochure that, together with the letter, he had handed over to Tuan Hazeu so that he would send the materials to Snouck in Leiden.[31]

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27 Blok added that the members of the literary circle, Waradarma, wanted to read the translation so that they could learn about Gods laws.The idea of learning directly from the Qur'an was a clear modernist point of view, Ibid..

28 Ibid.

29 The word Jawi can also mean Javanese.

30 It is noteworthy that Sayyid 'Uthman here translated the verse into Malay and did not give the Javanese rendering of Bagus Ngarpah. My former student Munirul Ikhwan has checked the Javanese translation of all 12 occurrences of the Arabic word *mushrikin* in the parts of the printed translation of Bagus Ngarpah, which are available in Leiden University, namely sura 1–sura 7: 85. Significantly, he did not find any reference to Chinese. The word *tepekong* means Chinese temple and is derived from the name Tua Pek Kong, the Buddhist deity of money, who is venerated in Chinese Buddhist temples all over Southeast Asia.

31 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje.'

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The brochure mentioned has been preserved and is entitled *Hukm al-Rahman bi-l-nahy ʿan tarjamat al-Qurʾan*, 'The judgement of the Merciful (sc. God) on the prohibition to translate the Qurʾan.' The booklet is bilingual (Arabic and Malay) and was published at the end of May 1909. In the introduction to this brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that he wrote the work after someone had brought him a copy of a *Jawi* translation of the Qurʾan and had requested his judgement on this. The letter to Snouck provides us with lively details about the background to this request as well as information about who the translator was and what the book looked like. In the booklet Sayyid ʿUthman advocated the prohibition of the translation of the Qurʾan, based on the traditional arguments. In short, he argued that the Arabic language could not be rendered adequately into another language, as this led to corruption (*tahrif*) and transformation (*tabdil*) of the Holy Book.[32] Moreover, the style of the Qurʾan (*balagha*) could not be imitated by a translation in a non-Arabic language. In conclusion, Sayyid ʿUthman stated that:

> [...] it is absolutely not permitted to translate the Qurʾan, for what has been translated is not the Qurʾan, but it is a corruption and transformation of the Qurʾan, as well as an insult. A translation should not be considered to be an Islamic book, but as something that causes Muslims to fall into religious sin.

It is noteworthy that Sayyid ʿUthman also discussed briefly the concept of *tafsir*, which, as mentioned above, the translator of the Javanese Qurʾan, Bagus Ngarpah, had adduced to justify the Javanese translation. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, *tafsir* means 'the explanation of words at their face value,' and this was only allowed by a person who had mastered Arabic linguistics perfectly; if this was true for *tafsir*, then this was even more applicable to *tarjama* (translation), which was basically transformation (*tabdil*) and change (*taghyir*) of words. In a final remark, he called the translator of the Qurʾan, which had been brought to him, a rebellious sinner who should repent by destroying his translation (pp. 5–8).

Thus, Sayyid ʿUthman categorically prohibited the translation of the Qurʾan. Although it appears that he was aware of the concept of *tafsir* in the discussion about the translation of the Qurʾan,[33] he sets out such heavy demands of a

32 These two Arabic terms are theological concepts in polemic and apologetic writings in which Jews and Christians are accused of having falsified the Holy Scriptures in line with their own teachings. The Malay rendering gives only *merusakkan* (to destroy) for both terms.

33 See below (p. 220) my discussion of Sayyid ʿUthman, *ʿIqd al-juman*.

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commentator in this brochure that he made it virtually impossible to use the concept as a compromise to allow a translation of the Qur'an.

Interestingly, from the correspondence between Sayyid 'Uthman and Snouck Hurgronje we are able to learn the latter's reaction to these observations. The letters from Snouck to Sayyid 'Uthman are lost, but his reaction becomes clear from a letter of 2 October 1909, sent by Sayyid 'Uthman to Snouck. In this letter, Sayyid 'Uthman refers to a (now lost) letter on the issue of Qur'an translation from 27 August 1909 sent to him by Snouck. In this letter Snouck affirmed that there were many translations of the Qur'an in non-Arabic languages (*'ajamiyya*) that had not been rejected. Sayyid 'Uthman's reply reads as follows:

> You have to realize, my dear, that this prohibition is pertinent to the translation of the Qur'an itself, for the reasons that we have mentioned in our brochure *Hukm al-Rahman*. But a translation of the interpretation of the Qur'an (*tarjamat al-tafsir al-Qur'an*) is, as we have said, permissible and there is no one who rejects that. May the difference between these two not be hidden to you.[34]

We thus see that in reaction to Snouck's view, Sayyid 'Uthman adopts a different tone on the issue of the *tafsir* of the Qur'an translation. In this letter he seemed to take a much less rigid view on the issue than in his booklet *Hukm al-Rahman*, and instead of permitting *tafsir* under extensive restrictions, in this letter he appears to take a more generous approach to circumventing the difficulties surrounding the proper translation of the Qur'an. This change of opinion is remarkable and I will return to it in the conclusion of this book.

### *Another Debate about the Naqshabandiyya Order*

In a letter, written in Malay, of 5 March 1907, Sayyid 'Uthman's expertise was called upon by a number of followers of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood in Mingakabau following a dispute amongst them on an unnamed book by Ahmad Khatib, which had been printed in Padang. In his reply, also in Malay, of 7 April 1907, Sayyid 'Uthman remarked that the brothers should recognize each other and referred to his own brochure *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*, which he included with his letter, for a correct understanding of the Naqshabandiyya order. This brochure explained that this *tarekat* was in itself fine, but that it required the fulfillment of many conditions before one could enter it. Frequently, these requirements were not met and therefore many individuals who had entered

34 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje.'

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the *tarekat* were actually not entitled to participate in it. Sayyid ʿUthman ended his letter by stating that:

> the rejection of all this by Ahmad Khatib is in line with the rejection of the *ʿulama'* of the Shariʿa, the *haqiqa*, and the *tariqa*,[35] albeit that it is not permitted to do this in a slanderous and disgraceful manner.

However, the performing of the *dhikr*[36] and the acceptance of the permission (*ijaza*) to recite meritorious litanies (*dhikr-dhikr yang sunnat*) were not forbidden. This issue also attracted the attention of the local administration, as is testified to by a number of official letters and transliterations of the correspondence in Western script.[37]

In his recent study, Michael Laffan deals with this issue and has identified the unnamed book of Ahmad Khatib as his *Izar zaghl al-kadhibin*, 'The exposition of the adulteration of the liars,' in which he accused the founder of the Khalidiyya brotherhood of having introduced heretical innovations into mystical practice. This book caused much debate, and the letter to Sayyid ʿUthman is just a small example of this. In a subsequent book by Ahmad Khatib, which he wrote in the framework of this debate in 1908, entitled *al-Sayf al-battar*, 'The sharp sword,' it appeared that he had heard about Sayyid ʿUthman's involvement in the issue. In the final pages of the book he referred explicitly to Sayyid ʿUthman's approval of his earlier attack on the Khalidiyya, and he mentioned him with appreciation: 'The respected Habib ʿUthman's answer reached me, and it was the words of a man whose heart God has cleansed of base passions.'[38]

For Sayyid ʿUthman this was a minor issue, but it shows us a few things. First, we see that the government was still watching the brotherhoods and that they involved Sayyid ʿUthman in this. This is particularly interesting as it had been assumed that after Snouck Hurgronje departed, the popularity of Sayyid ʿUthman within the administration had waned.[39] Secondly, we see that even in the far away Minangkabau, Sayyid ʿUthman was regarded as an important

35 According to this well-known trichotomy obedience to the Shariʿa is a precondition to enter the mystical path (*tariqa*) towards the Ultimate Truth (*haqiqa*).

36 This is a mystical exercise in which brotherhoods repeat incessantly the name of God or other religious formulas, in order to reach a state of trance.

37 'Correspondence on the Naqshabandiyya.'

38 Laffan, *The makings*, 181–183.

39 It is also known that D.A. Rinkes, on behalf of the Office for Native Affairs, consulted Sayyid ʿUthman on a mosque issue in Benkulen at the beginning of 1912, see Rinkes, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje,' 6 August 1912.

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authority, who was able to give an expert opinion on a book by the popular Ahmad Khatib. And, finally, the issue shows that despite their past disagreements on the issue of the new Palembang mosque, in this case Sayyid ʿUthman approved of the views of Ahmad Khatib. Moreover, it appears from his *al-Sayf al-battar* that Ahmad Khatib had also left his past differences with Sayyid ʿUthman behind him.

## 3 Guiding the Believers

In many of his brochures Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned the Prophetic tradition 'Religion is [giving] advice' (*al-din al-nasiha*) and quoted a saying from the *Nasa'ih* by the well-known ʿAbd Allah al-Haddad, stating '[to give] advice in religion is one of the duties of one Muslim towards another Muslim' (*min huquq al-Muslim ʿala l-Muslim al-nasiha fi l-din*).[40] Sayyid ʿUthman considered this a central and guiding principle in his career and, in fact, he published numerous writings that can be considered as an elaboration of this principle. In this section I will examine a number of these writings that have not yet been dealt with in previous chapters. As is to be expected, at times these works are rather repetitive and for this reason I will remain brief and focus on passages which provide information on the situation in the Netherlands East Indies.

### *Admonitions*

After Sayyid ʿUthman was officially appointed as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs on 3 May 1891, one of the first works he published to provide guidance (*hidaya*) to believers, was a work in Malay, bearing the Arabic title *Najat al-ikhwan min al-wuquʿ fi l-ʿisyan*, 'The salvation of the brothers from falling into disobedience.' The work was published in 1892 and was a kind of catalogue of great sins. Great sins harmed the reputation of a person in this life, while in the Afterlife it resulted in heavy punishment (pp. 2–7). Among the great sins that Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned were the swearing of false oaths, giving false testimony, accepting bribes, playing cards and drinking alcoholic drinks (pp. 7–18). In conclusion Sayyid ʿUthman stated:

> We hope that God will render this treatise a very good reason for every brother who wishes to read or to hear it to distance himself from all these sins (p. 19).

40 See e.g. Sayyid ʿUthman, *Fard al-nasiha*, 5. For al-Haddad, see E.I. (3), s.v.

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Apparently, this work was much in demand, for together with the well-known work the *Hidayat al-salikin* by ʿAbd al-Samad al-Palimbani (died after 1788) it was reprinted in Mecca by the Matbaʿa al-Miriyya in 1893 and, again, towards the end of Sayyid ʿUthman's life by another Meccan publisher – al-Matbaʿa al-Turki al-Majidiyya – in 1912.

In November 1894, Sayyid ʿUthman published another Malay work of moral and legal guidelines. As its title, *Perhiasan bagus bagi anak-anak perempuan*, 'The beautiful ornament for girls,' suggests, it was primarily aimed at girls, although Sayyid ʿUthman remarked that boys might also learn from it. In eighteen paragraphs Sayyid ʿUthman provides all kinds of rules that children must follow, such as obeying the rules for the *salat*. The booklet is general in nature and does not contain local elements or references to specific local circumstances. Nevertheless, I will render here, briefly, a few paragraphs on women, because they illustrate the kinds of morals that Sayyid ʿUthman was preaching in relation to the social role of women. In paragraph four he deals with the good qualities of a wife, including staying at home and not longing for luxury. The wife should take care of the household in a neat and modest way (par. 5). She should obey her husband and may only leave the house with his permission (par. 6). If she did leave the house she could possibly be seen by a foreign man and therefore she should wear modest attire and not use fragrant odours (par. 10).

A short Malay admonition to work hard was published in 1895 and was entitled *Fasal kewajiban pada mencari kehidupan*, 'On the obligation to seek a livelihood.' Largely based on Prophetic traditions, in this short brochure Sayyid ʿUthman explains that in Islam it is an obligation, similar to performing the *salat* or fasting, to seek a permitted livelihood (*kehidupan halal*) (pp. 2–5). There were various forms this could take, including trade, agriculture, breeding animals, crafts and wage labour. There were also prohibited ways of making money, like collecting interest, gambling, buying stolen goods, and deceiving people (pp. 6–9). When performing a job one should be diligent, as without diligence one could not fulfill the obligation of seeking a livelihood (pp. 9–10). Moreover, Islam forbade idleness with regard to finding work, which Sayyid ʿUthman supported with the Prophetic tradition: 'God Almighty dislikes from among His servants the idlers' (pp. 11–12).[41] At the end of the brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman reminds the reader that one should persevere when doing a job; that in the beginning the results might be modest, just as to begin with the trains or the steamships (*spoor atau kapal api*) were rather slow, but later things gain momentum, just as the powerful engines had become much faster (pp. 13–14).

41 Arabic *Inna Allah taʿala yakrihu min ʿibadihi al-sabahlal.*

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The context of this booklet is not clear, but perhaps he is addressing the same group of people as his 1880 *Islah al-halal* intended. As we have seen, this publication had a similar theme, urging returning pilgrims from Mecca not to remain idle, but to take a proper job.[42]

Another edifying work was published in 1897 with the intriguing title *Bunnat al-jalis wa-qahwat al-anis*, 'The coffee bean for the companion and the coffee for the friend.' The book was in Arabic and was largely based on the works of Hadrami scholars. It addressed an imagined pupil, called 'my brother,' and was directed at an Arab audience. The book was essentially concerned with encouraging the pursuit of learning, because Sayyid 'Uthman considered knowledge the most important way to gain the benefits of this world and the world hereafter (pp. 5–10). Section two is an exhortation to follow the example of the Forefathers (*al-salaf*) who followed the exemplary life of the Prophet. According to Sayyid 'Uthman, the people who followed the example of the Prophet best were his Family (*ahl al-bayt*) (pp. 10–12). Subsequent sections of the book provide moral advice, like avoiding greed, respecting one's parents, and generally avoiding sin (pp. 10–23). In sections nine to eleven, Sayyid 'Uthman becomes more explicit and specifically mentions the sin of consuming the forbidden (*akl al-haram*), such as property that is obtained through fraud and interest (*riba*). In fact, he regarded interest as one of the most despicable forms of property and the greatest sin. Next, Sayyid 'Uthman repeated his opinion that the most disgraceful example of this was appropriating the property of the Europeans and the Chinese through fraud, such as false sales contracts. This was forbidden by the Shari'a, because a treaty (*aman*) between Muslims and these others existed and therefore their property should be regarded the same as the property of Muslims (pp. 11–31).[43] Section twelve mentions that it is a duty to respect the saints (*awliya*), also after they are deceased (pp. 31–33). The remainder of the book elaborates on forbidden things, like the drinking of wine and listening to frivolous instruments, like the lute (pp. 33–44). On the final pages, Sayyid 'Uthman stresses the merits of following the obligations of the Shari'a (pp. 45–55).

A brief admonition with simple instructions for obtaining happiness in both this world and the next was published 'in low Batavian Malay' (*bahasa Melayu renda dari Betawi*) in 1897. This small booklet bore the title *Miftah al-sa'ada*, 'The key to happiness', and indicated in three paragraphs how this state

42 See Chapter Three. Sayyid 'Uthman, *Fasal kewajiban*, 5 referred to this earlier publication.

43 As we have seen in Chapter Three, this custom had already bothered Sayyid 'Uthman in 1880 and, apparently, it had not disappeared in 1897. The *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 140) also mentions that the *Bunnat al-jalis* rejected interest.

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could be reached. Firstly, the believer should believe in the pillars of Islam, the pillars of the faith and be aware of matters related to death and the Last Day (pp. 3–12). Secondly, the believer should act properly and undertake what was obligatory and reject what was forbidden. He must earn his income in an honest (*halal*) way, through trade, wage labour, agriculture or skilled or unskilled labour, while stealing and swindling was prohibited (pp. 13–18). Finally, the believer should think carefully when acting in order to avoid evil deeds. Together, these three conditions formed the key to happiness (pp. 19–22).[44]

A subsequent admonition was published in 1898 and was called *Tahdhir al-ʿibad min al-tahayyul li-faskh al-nikah bi-l-irtidad*, 'The warning of the servants of God against the deceptive dissolution of marriage through apostasy.' As the title of this Malay work suggests, it warned against the custom that saw Muslim wives enforce a divorce by becoming an apostate (*murtadd*), because their husbands were not legally allowed to remain married to an unbeliever.[45] Sayyid ʿUthman regarded this custom as an innovation (*bidʿa*) and as an extreme sin. He explained that the Islamic court (*raad agama*) should call on the woman to repent, but if she did not do so, as an apostate she no longer fell under the jurisdiction of the court and therefore could no longer claim property from her husband or his family. In addition, she no longer had the right to be buried in a Muslim cemetery, nor could she inherit from her family (pp. 7–16). Instead, Sayyid ʿUthman proposed resolving marital problems through the Shariʿa. The Law was just and clear about the rights and duties of both man and wife, and in cases where marital problems could not be overcome, both partners could address themselves to the judge of the Islamic court (*hakim sharʿ*) to enforce their rights (pp. 22–30). The booklet ended with various advice (*nasihat*) from Sayyid ʿUthman. Husbands were given the advice that if the intervention of the court did not improve the situation and did not restore marital happiness, he should divorce his wife. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman mentioned that if a husband feared that his wife might resort to the apostasy trick, he was obliged to divorce her, because he should never become the reason for her apostasy. Wives, too, were given advice. It was forbidden for a wife to violate the marital duties (*nashuz*) and, like her husband, she could also involve the court to affirm her rights. The third piece of advice was directed to individuals attempting to mediate between fighting marriage partners. This person should never advise a wife to become disobedient or an apostate, and should he do this, he would become an apostate himself. Finally, judges in these cases were advised to ensure that this use of apostasy did not occur (pp. 31–40).

44 In 1898 a transliteration in Western script appeared with Albrecht & Co. in Batavia.

45 Cf. Pijper, *Fragmenta Islamica*, 79–94.

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Another, more sizeable, admonition appeared in Malay in 1899 and was entitled *Risalah dua alam pada menyatakan perbedaan antara dua macam ilmu dan dua macam 'ulama'*, 'Treatise on the two worlds dealing with the difference between two kinds of knowledge and two kinds of scholars.' In it, Sayyid 'Uthman departed from the saying of the Prophet: 'There are two kinds of knowledge: knowledge in the heart and that is useful knowledge, and knowledge on the tongue and that is a testimony of God against the sons of Adam.' He explained that the first type of knowledge was in the heart permanently and filled with the rays of the faith. This knowledge led to useful things and was produced by scholars who occupied themselves with the Hereafter and who stimulated useful works. The second type of knowledge was only professed by the tongue without generating good actions. This type of knowledge was harmful and was produced by scholars who occupied themselves with worldly affairs and who were evil (pp. 2–4). Next, the book elaborates on this difference between the two types of scholars with regards to a number of issues. The first group of scholars dealt with knowledge and teaching out of dedication to God, while the second group was interested in money and power; the first type was humble, while the other was arrogant; the first type did not like polemics, while the second did; the first group showed respect to the Family of the Prophet, while this was absent among the second group; the first type acted on the basis of knowledge, while the second did not (pp. 4–52).

This book is phrased in very general terms and it is not possible to discern from the text who the book was directed at. It is clear, however, that Sayyid 'Uthman placed himself firmly among the first group of scholars and, most probably, the writing of this book was connected to his debates at the time with the Arabs in Batavia. Indeed, this book can be seen as an indirect criticism of them. Because the booklet was written 'in low Malay' it was intended to address the wider native public.

Another Malay booklet, which appeared in July 1901, linked up with the previous work and again dealt with the distinction between good and bad scholars. It was entitled *Najat al-akhyar min al-injirar ila l-ightiyar*, 'The salvation of the good people from falling into misguidance.' According to Sayyid 'Uthman, the people of his time had a habitual need for new things and this also held true for books. Whenever a new book appeared, one immediately wanted to have it without knowing its content. Sayyid 'Uthman often received books from various cities requesting his approval or asking him to print them. Among these works there were also books that had 'bad' content and which should not be read or be used for teaching, because they would lead to delusion (*ghurur*). There were three types of evil in these books: Firstly, the Arabic contained all kinds of mistakes; secondly, they contained much mystical terminology and it

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was not permitted to teach this to the common people; lastly, there were many theological expressions used incorrectly and this led the ignorant reader to the erroneous innovation (*bidʿa*) of the doctrine of the seven grades of Being (*bidʿa martabat tujuh*) or an incorrect understanding of the Essence of God and His attributes. All three could make one an unbeliever or a follower of forbidden innovations (pp. 10–13). In the remainder of the booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman repeated his earlier views on the preconditions that a practitioner of mysticism should meet, by referring to his own *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*.[46] The first precondition was knowledge of jurisprudence (*fiqh*) and the second was that 'Sufism had to follow the way of the Prophet in a perfect manner' (*wa-li-l-sufiyyah fi tariqihim husn al-mutabaʿa li-l-nabi*), as this was phrased by al-Suhrawardi (1145–1234) in his *Kitab al-ʿawarif*.[47] Moreover, he stated that 'it is not permitted to teach the common people by using profound and complicated expressions from the scholars of mysticism or from the scholars of theology,' because this might lead the common people to 'delusion, atheism, unbelief of forbidden innovations (*ghurur atau kepada zindiq atau kepada kufr atau kepada bidʿa*) (pp. 13–25). In conclusion, Sayyid ʿUthman reminded the reader that teachers were obliged to have a solid knowledge if they wanted to teach theology, jurisprudence or mysticism. They should teach only reliable (*muʿtamad*) books in these fields, having studied them first under a qualified teacher, and they should not automatically direct themselves to new books. By behaving in this way, religion could be safeguarded from errors (pp. 25–30).[48] Not long after the writing of the *Najat al-akhyar*, Sayyid ʿUthman would enter into the polemic with Haji Hasan Mustafa dealt with above and perhaps this admonition is related to this.

A very brief Arabic brochure appeared in 1905 and is entitled *Husul al-maʾmul bi-l-ʿamal bi-nasihat al-Rasul*, 'The obtaining of what had been hoped for in reward for acting according to the advice of the Messenger.' In this work, Sayyid ʿUthman stressed that the Family of the Prophet (*ahl al-bayt*) should be treated with love and respect, but that the members of this noble lineage should, nevertheless, comply with the rules of Islam. Given the attention paid

46 See Chapter Four, p. 110.

47 See on him, E.I. (2), ix, 778–782, not to be confused with an earlier scholar with the same name.

48 In a brief poem, *Syaʿir nasihat* ('A piece of advice in rhyme'), published slightly later (6 August 1901), Sayyid ʿUthman directed himself to the common people and repeated a number of these advices, e.g. one had to make an honest living and one should not get bored with the teaching of the old books.

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to the special position of the *sayyids*, it seems likely that Sayyid ʻUthman wrote this text to confirm his authority over particular opponents from this group.

Another brochure, this time in Malay, also touched on the position of the *sayyids*. It was entitled *Mustika pengaru buat menyembuhkan penyakit keliru*, 'The powerful jewel to cure the misleading disease.'[49] The brochure aimed to 'make a distinction between correct things and wrong things' (p. 12) and explained the difference between experts in religion (*khawass*) who hardly ever made a mistake and only profited from permitted matters, and common people (*awamm*) who often made mistakes and also profited from forbidden matters. There were also people who concealed their wrong behaviour, or even pretended to behave correctly. Sayyid ʻUthman ended this brochure by stating that it was compulsory to pay respect to the Family of the Prophet, unless they transgressed the Shariʻa (pp. 2–12).

A related booklet was entitled *Tabyin al-haqq min al-dalal wa-tanzihuhu min su' al-fiʻal*, 'Distinguishing the truth from evil and elevating it above wrongful acts.' The book, written in Arabic, was published in 1907. Its content was similar to the previous Malay booklet which also aimed at both experts and the common people. Its contents were rather repetitive and dealt with all of Sayyid ʻUthman's objections to transgressions in his surroundings and their remedies, often quoting from his own previous works, like the *Matiyat al-diraya* and the *Bunnat al-jalis.* Again, he mentions the supportive statements (*taqarid*) for his views by famous scholars we have come across before, including Muhammad Babasil (p. 15), Husayn al-Jisr (p. 17) and Yusuf al-Nabhani (p. 17).

Another brief booklet also served as a kind of moral guide, written 'to show the truth, which should be followed, and to uncover the void, which should be avoided' (p. 7). It was written in Arabic and was published in November 1911. As its title, *Jamʻ al-tahqiqat fi aqsam khawariq al-ʻadat*, 'The collection of investigations into aspects of the supernatural,' suggests, it dealt with different aspects of the supernatural. According to Sayyid ʻUthman, there were four aspects to this domain: the miracles (*muʻjiza*) that God had bestowed upon His prophets to prove their sincerity, like the Qur'an upon the Prophet Muhammad. The second was the miracle of a saint (*karama*), as mentioned in the Qur'an:

> Lo! Verily the friends of God (*awliya' Allah*) are those on whom fear cometh not, nor do they grieve. Those who believe and keep their duty [to God]. Theirs are good tidings in the life of the world and in the Hereafter (Qur'an 10: 62–4).

49 It is undated, but the Leiden catalogue mentions 1906 as year of publication.

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This is the longest section in the brochure and indicated that a saint should have a thorough knowledge of the Shari'a, stick to it and lead a life of piety and asceticism (pp. 3–6). The remaining two categories of the supernatural were prohibited and consisted of the activities of the practitioners of magic (*sihr*), and individuals who simulated saintly miracles (pp. 6–7).

A final admonition is a small and unique document that Sayyid 'Uthman appended to a letter to Snouck Hurgronje, dated 4 November 1912. In the letter, Sayyid 'Uthman reported on all kinds of social unrest. In Batavia the Chinese had cut of their pigtails[50] and looked like Europeans and treated the Arabs and the Malays arrogantly. In Ceribon, Surabaya and other places there had been clashes between the Arabs and the Chinese. Sayyid 'Uthman decided to issue an admonition (*nasiha*) to the Arabs in order to address and improve the situation, and consequently he had this admonition read out in the mosque of Pekojan after the Friday prayer. After the usual pious openings, the core lines of this *nasiha* read as follows:

> In case someone from the *Majus*,[51] or others who are no match for you, treat you badly, you should not respond with fighting, but refer the matter to your father and he will refer it to the government. This is not a sign of submissiveness, rather it shows your superiority and aversion to evil and your high ranking amongst mankind. Accept this admonition – may God bless you – and make it your highest quality. For today you are in the Mercy of the Almighty God, through what has made your authority and the authority of your father unique, namely – and therein lies your pious nature and your noble condition – the high official rank (*al-manzila al-rafi'a min wali al-amr*) that God has bestowed upon your father. And this is really a reason for pride and glory for all Arabs, and this makes them distinct in decency and respect from the ones who show hostility and enmity towards them.[52]

We see here that Sayyid 'Uthman referred to himself as 'father' of the Arabs, and that he thought his position within the government was an asset for all Arabs.

50 Thus challenging the existing social order, see above, p. 138.

51 The *Majus* are the fire worshippers, here the Chinese.

52 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje.'

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### *Fatwas*

In the period dealt with in this chapter, in addition to other *fatwas* mentioned under other headings, Sayyid ʿUthman also issued occasional *fatwas* on very diverse issues, born out of his constant concern to guide believers. In 1892 he published a small collection of five *fatwas* in Arabic. This collection was mentioned by Snouck Hurgronje, who supplied the supplementary information that these questions were directed to Sayyid ʿUthman by two Arab *sayyids* from the isle of Madura, Sayyid Muhammad al-Jufri and Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn Shahab. They had approached Sayyid ʿUthman because they wanted to expose the allegedly incompetent *penghulu* of Sumenep who had issued a number of *fatwas* of doubtful content. Consequently, the two *sayyids* asked for *fatwas* from Sayyid ʿUthman on the same issues.[53] The first *fatwa* dealt with some technicalities of the *salat* (pp. 2–3). The second discussed the granting of money for festivities on the occasion of a marriage, a circumcision or other events, where music was made and female singers and dancers were present. According to Sayyid ʿUthman, this was strictly forbidden (pp. 3–5). The third *fatwa* dealt with the wearing of a type of gold that was mixed with copper, 'which is called *suasa* by the people of Java.' According to Sayyid ʿUthman, it was forbidden for men to wear jewellery made from this material (pp. 5–7). The next *fatwa* is the longest and deals with the opinion of someone who had stated that the *sayyids* do not have to respect the principle of *kafa'a* in marrying off their daughters. This opinion was rejected by Sayyid ʿUthman in the strongest terms (pp. 7–28). The collection ended with the issue of whether it was necessary to instruct a religious functionary (read: the Madurese *mufti*) in the knowledge he needed for the execution of his function. Unsurprisingly, Sayyid ʿUthman's answer was yes (pp. 28–31).

The *kafa'a* issue was again the subject of a separate *fatwa*, which Sayyid ʿUthman issued in 1894. In this Arabic *fatwa* of six pages, he again disqualified an unnamed *mufti* who had approved of a marriage between a *sharifa* and a non-*sayyid*. It is possible that the *fatwa* was issued in response to a case in Pekalongan, for the file includes an approval of a certain Husayn ibn Muhsin al-ʿAttas who had witnessed such a marriage there.[54]

A number of *fatwas* issued by Sayyid ʿUthman in later years has been preserved. An interesting example is a brief *fatwa* in Malay, which he gave in 1899. The *fatwa* deals with the veil (*kerudung*) and in it Sayyid ʿUthman stated that a woman should cover her entire body, including the head, when foreign men (*laki-laki ajnabi*) were able to see her. However, when a woman was in her own

53 Snouck, 'Vier geschenken,' 261–265.

54 Sayyid ʿUthman, '*Fatwa* on the *kafa'a* issue.'

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house and she could not be seen, then it was not obligatory to cover her head. The reason given for covering herself for a foreign man was the avoidance of temptation (*fitna*). For the same reason, a wife should not wear clothes that beautify her face and her body, and she should avoid luxurious and embroidered textiles.[55] Thus, we see that Sayyid ʿUthman propagates a strict dress code for women, including covering the face. As previously mentioned, the *fatwa* was in Malay, so he apparently intended this prescription not only for Arab women, but also for natives. A later newspaper article mentions that Sayyid ʿUthman resented the fact that many Arab women did not wear the veil and left their faces exposed.[56]

Another example of a separate *fatwa* dealt with the question of whether or not the use of European perfume was permitted. The text bears the Arabic title *al-Mabahith al-wafiyya fi hukm al-aʿtar al-ifranjiyya*, 'Reliable investigations on the legal judgement on European perfumes,' and appeared in 1904. It was in Arabic with a Malay translation in the margin. To start with, Sayyid ʿUthman explains that he was approached to give his opinion on perfumes, as well as on turpentine and another fluid used to polish furniture, called *politur*.[57] In addition, he was asked about the legal status of black beer (*bir hitam*) and a beverage called *brem*, which the Javanese made of rice, and another called *tuak*, 'palm wine.' In his answer to these questions, Sayyid ʿUthman stated that the deciding factor in all these matters was whether or not the items contained alcohol. Alcohol was defined as something that made one drunk and if an item contained this substance, it was forbidden; if it did not, then it was permitted. If there was any doubt, then the item should be avoided (pp. 2–9). According to Sayyid ʿUthman, this was definitely true in the case of black beer, but when *brem* and the palm juice had not yet fermented and did not contain alcohol, they could be consumed. Turpentine and *politur* were also pure and despite the fact that they could smell like alcohol, use of these liquids was allowed (pp. 9–13).

A *fatwa* by Sayyid ʿUthman that related to his 1905 reaction against the Transvaal *fatwa* of Muhammad ʿAbduh, concerned the proper way to slaughter animals. This time the question, which emanated from various places, including Palembang, Amuntai and Banka, dealt with the issue of selling chickens to Chinese, as it was not certain how they would prepare the chickens for consumption. The answer was given in a very small brochure of just three pages.

55 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Fatwa* on the *kerudung*.

56 'Orthodoxe en moderne zonen Hadramauds.' *Sumatra Post* 27 February 1913 (quoted from the *Java-Bode*).

57 Adopted from the Dutch language.

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It was written in Arabic with a Malay summary and was entitled *Daf' al-lajjaj fi mas'ilat bay' al-dajjaj*, 'The rejection of the obstinate on the issue of selling chickens,' and was published in 1906. In this *fatwa*, Sayyid 'Uthman stated that it was not forbidden to sell chickens or other animals to Chinese or 'other unbelievers,' unless one knew that they would slaughter the animals by beating them to death on the head, or by suffocating them. The reason was that God had forbidden this in the Qur'anic verse 'forbidden for you is carrion' (Q. 2: 173; 16:115). In cases of doubt about how the Chinese would kill the animals, then it was better to refrain from selling animals to them. If, however, one knew that a Muslim would slaughter the animals for them, it was allowed. As always, the argument was supported by quotes from the Shafi'i legal authorities.

Another publication dates from the beginning of 1912, when Sayyid 'Uthman was approached to issue a *fatwa* on another *fatwa* that had declared that the kissing of the hands of the *sayyids* was compulsory. Sayyid 'Uthman responded in a small brochure in Arabic, entitled *Tasrij al-qandil li-bayan hukm al-taqbil*, 'The lighting of the lamp to clarify the legal judgement on the kissing [of the hands].' Sayyid 'Uthman denied that this custom was compulsory and in his *fatwa* he focused the discussion on the concept of *mawadda* which, as we have seen earlier, was the Qur'anic term used to denote the love and respect that believers should have for the descendants of the Prophet. According to Sayyid 'Uthman, there were no texts by reliable scholars that regarded the kissing of the hands as an element of this respect and therefore it was not compulsory (p. 5). When a *sayyid* required that his hands be kissed, this was a forbidden act. When a person, of his own will, wanted to kiss the hand of the *sayyids* to show his *mawadda*, this provided him with reward; but if one did not do this, there was no blame, since the only thing that was compulsory in this context was respect for the *sayyids*. Furthermore, many people in the Haramayn who had the greatest respect for the *sayyids* did not kiss their hands (pp. 12–14).

Among the undated *fatwas* that have been preserved, I mention here one that is kept in the Hazeu Archive and therefore probably dates from after 1906, the year Hazeu succeeded Snouck Hurgronje as Advisor.[58] The *fatwa* is in Arabic and deals with a wife who was in distress because her husband had lowered her living expenses (*nafaqa*) and money for her outfits and did not provide her with a proper living place. Moreover, this distress was exacerbated because her husband had a habit of exposing her to foreign men. When the wife asked her husband for a divorce, he refused and this situation continued for some time. In his response to this issue, Sayyid 'Uthman stated that, due to this distress,

58 It should be noted, however, that older materials are also found in the Hazeu archive, because some parts of the Snouck archive were incorporated into it in the 1970s.

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the Shari'a permitted the wife to get a divorce on her own initiative (*faskh*). Sayyid 'Uthman supported this *fatwa* with quotes from older scholars, including from his teacher 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar.[59]

## 4 Scholar and Writer

Similar to the period before he entered the service of the administration, Sayyid 'Uthman wrote and printed numerous books, brochures and other works in the period under discussion here. It is important to note that he did this next to the often hectic polemics and this demonstrates his enormous energy and productivity. In this section I will deal with these works. For the sake of convenience, I have put related works in the same category and within these different categories, in principle, I follow a chronological order.

### *Works Dealing with Ritual*

As a fully fledged expert in religious matters, Sayyid 'Uthman also dealt with issues related to ritual, sometimes at the request of particular believers. An interesting example of this is his Malay brochure *Tanbih al-ghisman di dalam perkara Ratib Samman*, 'The advice to the ignorant on the issue of the *Ratib Samman*,' from 1891. The *Ratib Samman* is a well known mystical litany (*ratib*) composed by the founder of the Sammaniyya mystical order, the Medinan scholar Muhammad al-Samman (1718–1775). The booklet started by mentioning that believers should follow the Prophet in devotion and in good manners (*adab*) and that the etiquette of a mystical ritual was to behave humbly, not to move wildly and to use a modest voice (pp. 2–6). According to Sayyid 'Uthman, the *Ratib Samman* performed in his time included four errors. Firstly, the phrase *La ilaha illa llah* ('There is no God but God') was pronounced incorrectly; secondly, the phrase was uttered too loudly; and thirdly, the formula was used to disturb a sleeping or sick person, and finally, the *Ratib Samman* was performed instead of the obligatory *salat*. However, if one avoided all these mistakes and stuck to the proper etiquette of devotion, Sayyid 'Uthman concluded that it was permitted to perform the *Ratib Samman*, because 'Shaykh Samman is a pious person who belongs to the saints of God' (pp. 7–17).

Around 1892,[60] Sayyid 'Uthman published a collection of devotional texts entitled *Maslak al-akhyar fi l-ad'iyat wa-l-adhkar*, 'The path for the good people

59 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Mas'ilat waqi'at al-hal.*

60 The work is undated, but contains a reference to Sayyid 'Uthman's *Irshad al-anam* from 1889, and the previously mentioned *Tanbigh al-ghisman* from 1891. The work is still available today in Indonesia.

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containing prayers and litanies.' The booklet started by explaining a number of rules and considerations related to the reading of these texts. A precondition for reciting these texts was that one possessed the compulsory religious knowledge and one performed the compulsory religious practices, like the *salat*. Moreover, one should not change the wording of the texts, must pronounce them correctly and not add letters, 'as is done presently by people reciting the *Ratib Samman*.' Thirdly, it was important to know the meaning of the texts. This differed from the Qur'an, for even if one did not know the meaning of the Holy Book, its recitation was still meritorious, at least if it was done according to the rules of the science of Qur'anic recitation (*tajwid*). The final point was that during the recitation of these devotional texts, preferably, one should direct oneself to the *qibla*, be in a state of ritual purity and humbleness, and should not shout when reciting (pp. 2–4). After this introduction, Sayyid 'Uthman presented a large number of many shorter and longer prayers (*du'a'*) for all kinds of occasions (pp. 5–40). These prayers are presented according to a fixed pattern. First, the occasion for which the *du'a'* is meant is mentioned in Malay. Sometimes details about the actual reading are given, for instance how many times the text should be recited. Next, the actual prayer in Arabic with an interlinear Malay rendering follows. Below is a short example, selected at random:

> This prayer is read when seeing your face in the mirror: *Allahuma ka-ma hassanta khalqi fa-hassin khulqi*; *hai Tuhan ku sebagaimana telah engkau membaguskan kejadianku maka baguskanlah perangaiku*, O God, just like You have created me with a beautiful appearance, beautify my behaviour (p. 14).

After these prayers, two famous devotional texts from the well-known Hadrami scholar al-Habib 'Abd Allah al-Haddad were given in Arabic with an interlinear rendering, namely his *Wird* and his *Ratib* (pp. 47–71).[61] To conclude the collection, Sayyid 'Uthman finished with more prayers, such as one for the middle of the month Sha'ban (p. 77–80).[62]

In 1893 Sayyid 'Uthman published the *Tahsil al-maram mim-ma yata'allaqa bi-takbirat al-ihram*, 'The attainment of desire due to the things that relate to the uttering of the formula 'God is the greatest' at the beginning of the *salat*.' As its title indicates, this Malay work deals with a number of technicalities relating to the ritual prayer; namely, how the utterance of the formula 'God is the

61 See E.I. (3), s.v.

62 See also above Chapter Six on this occasion, p. 181.

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Greatest' (*takbir*), which should be said prior to and during every *salat* (*takbirat al-ihram*), could be combined with the intention (*niyya*) that should precede every ritual action, including the *salat*. In this booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman relates opinions from earlier scholars, like al-Ghazali, on this issue and also deals with the related issue of whether or not the *niyya* may be uttered aloud or should be made in the heart.[63]

Another pious work by Sayyid ʿUthman is entitled *al-Mirath al-Nabawi fi ma tadammanahu al-Mashraʿ al-rawi*, 'Materials on the Prophetic legacy taken from 'The thirst-quenching drinking place.' 'The thirst-quenching drinking place' (*al-Mashraʿ al-rawi*) mentioned was a book by the seventeenth-century Hadrami scholar Abu ʿAlawi Muhammad al-Shilli (1621–1682) from Tarim, which contained more than 280 biographies of Hadrami mystics and *sayyids*.[64] Sayyid ʿUthman reported that a number of printed copies of this work had arrived in the Netherlands East Indies and that it had become very popular among the *sayyids* and other believers, because its reading was expected to bring the blessing (*baraka*) of the Forefathers (*al-salaf*) to the their offspring. In order to spread this blessing even further, Sayyid ʿUthman wrote his book (p. 1).[65]

After an introduction with general admonitions, Sayyid ʿUthman explained the special position of the Forefathers and their descendants, the ʿAlawi *sayyids*. They were the most perfect in continuing the example of the Prophet. They possessed many praiseworthy qualities, like their ability to memorize and recite the Qur'an, their wide knowledge of the Shariʿa, their support for others pursuing knowledge, their piety,[66] their indifference (*zuhd*) towards food, dress and housing and, finally, their pre-eminence in the propagation of the faith (*daʿwa*) (pp. 11–34). As the best representatives of the Forefathers, the *sayyids* were responsible for propagating the prohibitions of the Shariʿa, like the wearing of dress items that were not worn by the pious Forefathers, drink-

63 This issue on the utterance of the *niyya*, the so-called *usalli*-issue, became a matter of debate between the Kaum Muda and the Kaum Tua a decade later. See Kaptein, 'The *berdiri mawlid* issue.'

64 The full title reads *al-Mashraʿ al-rawi fi manaqib al-sada al-kiram Al Abi ʿAlawi*, 'The thirst-quenching drinking place dealing with the virtues of the noble *sayyids* of the family of Abu 'Alawi.' It was printed in Cairo 1319/1901–2. See E.I. (2), ix, 441–442, s.v. al-Shilli.

65 The book is in Arabic and not dated. However, the catalogue of Leiden University Library indicates that it is from c. 1902.

66 Here, Sayyid ʿUthman also mentioned the opposite of piety, like the consuming of forbidden property and the worst form of this, *riba* (pp. 21–2). This is a reference to his earlier attacks on the Arabs, see Chapter Five.

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ing wine, and listening to the lute (*gambus*) and the flute (*mizmar*). Instead of this, people should reflect upon death and the Afterlife and repent (pp. 34–64).

A final text related to ritual is a small pamphlet that Sayyid ʿUthman published towards the end of his life on 7 Augustus 1912. The pamphlet is in Malay and is entitled *Wajib nasihat menyatakan batal imam jumʿat*, 'Compulsory advice about the defunct Friday *imam*.' Over five pages he states that an *imam* who wanted to lead the prayer service should be able to pronounce the Arabic formulas correctly and should be accepted by the congregation. If these conditions are not met, the prayer is not valid. Rulers who appoint such an *imam* commit a great sin.

### *Theological Writings*

In 1896 Sayyid ʿUthman produced a theological treatise in Arabic with a Malay translation in the margin, entitled *al-ʿIqd al-farid fi baʿd masaʾil al-tawhid*, 'The unique necklace dealing with a number of theological issues.' He wrote this booklet at the request of a number of teachers of Islamic theology who had trouble understanding the different theological and philosophical terms. The writing offered, in brief, the conceptual and analytical instruments for understanding theological works and, for instance, explained different kinds of necessity: *wajib ʿaqli*, necessary according to reason, *wajib sharʿi*, necessary according to the Holy Law, *wajib dhati*, necessary by nature, and *wajib ʿaradi*, accidentally necessary. Sayyid ʿUthman largely based the work on al-Ghazali's *Ihya ʿulum al-din* and confirmed completely the teachings of the Ashʿarite school of theology.

Another theological writing by Sayyid ʿUthman is a short, undated booklet in Malay, which introduces Islam in a very simple way. In a later sales catalogue of the works of Sayyid ʿUthman it was designated as a work written especially for children.[67] The booklet bears the Arabic title *Bab al-minan* ('The gate to mercies') and had as a Malay subtitle *Pintu segala pengasih di dalam perkara rukun-rukunan*, 'The gate to mercies dealing with the fundamentals' (sc. of Islam). It mentions the five pillars of Islam and the six pillars of the faith. The longest part of the booklet clarifies when and how the ritual ablution must be performed (pp. 3–6). Next, the five ritual daily prayers, as well as the Friday prayer, the funeral prayer and the feast prayer are dealt with (pp. 6–8). The booklet ends by mentioning the *zakat*, fasting in Ramadan and the pilgrimage to Mecca (pp. 8–10).

67 Yahya ibn ʿUthman, *Daftar*, nr. 16.

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### *The Establishment of the New Moon*

As we have seen in Chapter Three, this issue also occupied Sayyid ʿUthman earlier in his career and from time to time it flared up again, as the following elaborate Arabic book on the issue illustrates. The full title of the book reads *Iqaz al-niyam fi ma taʿallaqa bi-l-ahilla wa-l-siyam*, 'The waking up of the sleeping dealing with the new moons and fasting.' It deals in great detail and in a conventional way with the issues related to the new moon. The copy of this Arabic work that I consulted dates from 1903, but it was written earlier, as is evidenced by the fact that a large number of quotes from it are used by Sayyid ʿUthman in his manual for the religious courts from 1894. Many of the issues covered in this work are the same as in his older works on the topic and, therefore, need not be repeated here. However, given my interest in the functioning of Islam in the colonial context of the Dutch East Indies, I note here a few points.

In the chapter on the conditions a witness has to fulfill in order to give a valid testimony for the seeing of the new moon, Sayyid ʿUthman quoted a passage from the *Tuhfa* by Ibn Hajar. This passage mentioned that, amongst others, the quality of being virtuous (*muruʾa*) was a necessary condition for giving a valid testimony but that this was destroyed by wearing a hat and a collar (p. 22). Secondly, in order to clarify the complicated astronomical passages in this writing, the book contains a large number of tables and drawings. One of these drawings presents an overview of the twelve sections of the zodiac (*buruj*)[68] and, interestingly, it indicated 'those months, used by the Europeans in the Jawa lands, with which they coincide.' Another local element is Sayyid ʿUthman's warning that this chart was made for Java and that the directions indicated differed for other regions (p 52–53). A final noteworthy point dealt with individuals who had to accept the testimony from the witnesses and to announce the new month in public. This person was the judge (*qadi*) and he, too, had to fulfill all kinds of conditions to be qualified for this function. One condition was that he had to be appointed by the sultan. According to Ibn Hajar, this appointment was also valid if the sultan was a sinner, 'so that the well-being of the people is not neglected,' or even – according to the author of the *Fath al-muʿin* – if he was an unbeliever. In this section, Sayyid ʿUthman also quoted from the *Fatawa* by his teacher Sayyid ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar, who had also been active in Southeast Asia, as we have seen above. Here it reads:

68 See E.I.(2), s.v. *mintakat al-burudj*.

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> If the unbelievers conquer a region from the Territory of Islam – may God save us from that – and they appoint a Muslim as judge, it is evident that his *qadi*-ship is legally valid (pp. 85–6).

The second part of the *Iqaz al-niyam* is much shorter and deals with case studies related to fasting, both connected and unconnected to the date that the fasting should start or end. For example, the question of whether or not someone had broken his fasting when, during the ritual ablutions, water had entered his ears (pp. 96–102). The third and last part of the text dealt with the virtues of fasting (pp. 102–110).

As we have seen in Chapter One, the issue of the new moon was also dealt with in a lively manner in the *Qamar al-zaman*, where it was mentioned that, in 1902, a *penghulu* in Batavia, in an attempt to promote himself, started the Ramadan fast, while others had not yet begun. Consequently, this issue developed into a battle for prestige between Sayyid ʿUthman and the *penghulu*, and this was won by the former who ostentatiously had a drink to challenge the authority of the *penghulu*, whereupon the community also started to drink. In order to instruct the public on the right way to establish the new moon, the *Qamar al-zaman* continued, Sayyid ʿUthman subsequently published his work *Tamyiz al-haqq min al-dalal fi mas'ilat al-hilal*, 'The distinction between the truth and error surrounding the issue of the new moon' (stanza 141–148). This book has been preserved[69] and, as it states, is a short Malay version of the *Iqaz al-niyam* (p. 2). The booklet also contains illustrations, e.g. a circle depicting the different phases of the moon during the month, in the middle of which is printed the Qur'anic verse: 'And for the moon, We have appointed mansions till she returns like an old shriveled palm-leaf' (Qur'an 36: 39) (p. 20). It also confirms the description of the work in the *Qamar al-zaman* (stanza 147).

### *Works for Practical Use*

As in earlier phases of his career, from time to time Sayyid ʿUthman published works for practical use. An example of this is a dictionary that he published in 1897, entitled *Qamus Arabiyya, Melayu, Sunda*.[70] Unlike in his previous two dictionaries, the source language was not Malay, but Arabic; moreover, in addition to Malay a second target language was included; namely, Sundanese, prepared by a certain Raden Haji Azhari Bandung. Few vowels were indicated in the Arabic part; in contrast, the Malay and Sundanese renderings frequently

69 The copy I used here dates from 1902.

70 The book is not dated, but I have taken the year of publication mentioned in the catalogue of Leiden University Library.

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added vowels. For this reason, it seems that this word list was intended for native speakers of Arabic who wanted to mix with natives of Batavia and West Java.[71] These individuals could have been traders or visitors from the Middle East, or people who, in one way or another, were related to the large number of Arab immigrants living in the Netherlands East Indies.[72]

A practical work of an entirely different nature was published in May 1901. The book is a substantial work in Malay on the topic of Qur'an recitation, bearing the Arabic title *'Iqd al-juman fi adab tilawat al-Qur'an*, 'The necklace of pearls dealing with the proper recitation of the Qur'an.' As its title indicates, the book elaborates on all kinds of issues related to the reciting of the Qur'an, which is a well-known genre in Islamic scholarship.[73] In this work, Sayyid 'Uthman dealt with all the usual topics in the field, ranging from the way a reader of the Qur'an should behave during his performance to the proper uttering of the recital. The major part of the book deals with all kinds of technicalities in great detail, e.g. how particular letters should be articulated in the mouth (*makharij*), whether or not consonants should be pronounced emphatically (*tafkhim*), the assimilation of particular letters (*idgham*), whether the letters *nun* and *mim* should have a nasalized pronunciation (*ghumna*), the lengthening of the vowels (*madd*), and the speed of recitation.

All this is a very conventional presentation of the material, but at the end the book becomes more interesting. In the section on the seven canonical readings of the Qur'an (*qira'at tujuh*), Sayyid 'Uthman gives his own scholarly genealogy (*sanad kami*) in this field. This pedigree is demonstrated in five diagrams that run from his teacher, 'Abd Allah ibn 'Umar ibn Yahya, via numerous scholars, through Ja'far al-Sadiq to the Prophet, who received this knowledge from the Angel Gabriel (pp. 114–119). In another noteworthy section, Sayyid 'Uthman deals with the writing of the Qur'an in non-Arabic script. This was forbidden (*haram*), but this did not hold true for the writing of an explanation (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an:

> The writing of an explanation of the Qur'an in non-Arabic script (*dengan bukan huruf Arab*) or the reading of the explanation of the Qur'an in another language than Arabic are all permitted, albeit on the condition

71 Laffan, 'New charts,' 372 also holds this opinion.

72 I have dealt with this dictionary in more detail in Kaptein, 'Arabic-Malay lexicography,' 133–135.

73 For an excellent introduction to this difficult topic, see the article by Gade, 'Recitation of the Qur'an.'

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> that what one uses has been explained by an Arab scholar in the Arabic language.

Likewise, a *tafsir* that had been translated from Arabic to another language by a fully qualified scholar, could be used for teaching purposes (pp. 121–122). I think the non-Arabic script mentioned in this quotation must refer to Javanese; perhaps Sayyid ʿUthman was consulted on plans for a Javanese translation of the Qurʾan. As we have seen above, he later opposed this in his *Hukm al-Rahman* from 1909.[74]

In the same year Sayyid ʿUthman published a brief booklet in Malay for aspiring pilgrims to Mecca. The booklet is entitled *Aturan yang terpuji bagi yang hendak pergi haji*, 'The commended guide for those who wish to perform the pilgrimage.' In this booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman lists in fifteen short paragraphs the obligations a pilgrim should fulfill. The first eleven had to do with the period preceding departure for the Holy Land. For instance, the aspiring pilgrim should be in a financial position that allowed him to make the *hajj*, including being in possession of a return ticket and having made financial arrangements for his children. The motivation for making the pilgrimage should be religious and not inspired by a desire to be allowed to wear a turban after return and to use the title of *haji*.[75] Moreover, the pilgrim should prepare himself by studying pilgrims' guides, like the *Manasik*, which Sayyid ʿUthman published in both Malay and Sundanese (p. 7). A female pilgrim should have a chaperone (*mahram*) or should travel with her husband (p. 10). Moreover, in preparing for the journey one should choose reliable transportation (p. 11). Paragraphs 11 and 12 look at issues that are important during the pilgrimage: according to Sayyid ʿUthman, it was not compulsory to abandon daily prayers during the *hajj*, and the pilgrim should pay respect (*hormat takzim*) to the Kaʿba in Mecca and to the grave of the Prophet in Medina (pp. 12–13). The remaining paragraphs deal with the situation after returning from the pilgrimage. In these paragraphs, Sayyid ʿUthman stressed that one should not take home books that contain innovations (*bidʿas*), and on returning to the homeland one should behave well according to the Shariʿa and *adat*, and one should make a living in a legal (*halal*) way. With regard to this last point, Sayyid ʿUthman referred to his own work *Kitab islah al-hal* from 1880 (pp. 13–16).[76]

74 See this chapter above, p. 200.

75 According to the Dutch Haji-Ordonance of 1859 a returning pilgrim had to do an examination and after he passed, he was allowed to use the title of *haji and* wear the specific *haji* dress, see Vredenbregt, 'The Haddj,' 100.

76 See above Chapter Three, p. 91.

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Another a very brief Malay brochure that falls within this category of works for practical use was published at the beginning of 1904 and was entitled *Perihal pekuburan*, 'About cemeteries.' In this booklet, Sayyid 'Uthman discusses a number of points related to burial grounds and gives an explaination about compulsory and forbidden matters related to graves. He starts by mentioning that out of respect for the human body, graves must be taken care of, to ensure that they do not collapse or become dirty and that animals are not allowed to walk freely over them. In cases where the cemetery was a pious foundation (*waqf*), a caretaker or someone chosen by the deceased should look after the graves. For men it was meritorious to make a pilgrimage to the grave (*ziyarah*) and read the Qur'an, pronounce the *tahlil* and the *tasbih*,[77] as well as to perform the ritual prayer and the invocation for the benefit of the dead. Moreover, it was meritorious to lay down basil or other herbs or leaves, which made the grave humid (pp. 2–4). On the other hand, it was strictly forbidden to drop impure things on a grave. One should avoid the possibility of animals polluting or destroying graves and the person holding power in the area (*yang berkuasa negeri*) was responsible for this. The brochure ended with the hope that, in addition to a number of benefits that the government had already made available, it might also assist in erecting fences around burial grounds, to prevent animals from getting into the grounds and trampling the graves (pp. 4–8).

Another very practical work is a manual for people who are confronted with a death. The booklet is in Malay and is entitled *Ilmu kemestian di perihal kematian*, perhaps best translated as 'Everything you should know about death.' The booklet appeared in 1905 and deals, in eleven sections, with various topics related to death. These topics cover practical, legal, social-ethical and ritual issues and are written in a very simple and direct style, clearly addressing a general audience. For instance, it mentions how one should behave at a deathbed, or in a house of mourning, and even the dying are given advice on how to behave. Other topics dealt with are the preparation of the body for the funeral (washing and shrouding), the funeral service and the costs for the funeral. Section six refers to a number of innovations (*bid'as*) that take place when a death occurs. As an example, Sayyid 'Uthman mentions:

> [...] when someone dies on a Saturday, a banana tree should be chopped down, or one's sarong should be smeared with resin. Also, the children must walk underneath the bier and a coconut is split above the grave of

77 The exclaiming of *subhana Allah*, 'Praise God.'

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> the dead, so that the dead [mother] will not come back to disturb her child.[78]

It goes without saying that all of this was forbidden (p.9).

### *Mosque Issues*

As we have seen in Chapter Three, already in an early phase of his career in Batavia, Sayyid ʻUthman became involved in issues related to the mosque and Chapter Four showed that, from 1894 onwards, Sayyid ʻUthman had been engaged for years in a polemic on the new Friday mosque in Palembang. Issues relating to mosques were to keep him busy later on in his career too, as is clear from a small Malay *fatwa*, entitled *Jawab empat soal di perihal masjid-masjid*, 'Answer to four questions about the mosque,' which he published in 1902. The *fatwa* is very simple and gives a brief overview of the etiquette that a believer should observe in relation to the mosque. Firstly, Sayyid ʻUthman mentioned that one should respect the mosque, because it was the place for the ritual prayer (*sembahyang*) and was counted among the essential manifestations of Islam (*shaʻaʾir*). This respect might be shown by the recommended custom of entering the mosque with the right foot first, while uttering the formula 'I take refuge with God' (*istiʻadha*), or by praying a *salat* of two *rakʻas*[79] before sitting down. Secondly, it was a duty for all Muslims to keep the mosque tidy and to clean it with water when something impure had entered the mosque. Moreover, it was forbidden to enter the mosque after one had eaten onions or leeks, because the odour from the mounth would disturb the angels; likewise it was prohibited to pollute the mosque with remnants of food or coffee. In addition, one must see to it that in the vicinity of the mosque there were no pig stalls and opium dens, because the smells would cause irritation to the people performing the prayer. Anyone who established a place like this near the mosque was an unbeliever. Thirdly, inside or next to the mosque one should not do forbidden things, like dancing or clapping, because this was disrespectful to the mosque. Finally, Sayyid ʻUthman mentioned that a person who did not obey

78 Snouck, 'Wedono-pensioen,' 242–3 reported the custom that (grand)children were made to walk three times underneath the bier to bid farewell to the deceased, and the custom of splitting a coconut above the grave of a deceased mother who left behind a baby; one half was left on the grave, while a piece of the other half was fed to the baby in order to reduce the damage from the separation from his mother.

79 According to the E.I.(2) s.v. a *rakʻa* is 'a sequence of utterances and actions performed by the Muslim believer as part of the act of worship or *salat*, involving utterance of the *takbir* and *Fatiha*, followed by the bending of the body from an upright position (*ruku*ʻ) and then two prostrations (*sujud*).'

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the good manners set out in this *fatwa*, committed a great sin by neglecting Gods orders and as a result became a sinner (*fasiq*). At the end, the *fatwa* mentions a number of actions that were not permitted in the mosque; namely, trading, making noise and reading non-religious texts (*shair nyanyi*). It concludes with an exhortation to stick to the guidelines of this *fatwa* (2–14).

As mentioned above, around 1873, Sayyid ʻUthman's expertise was called upon to establish the correct *qibla*. This was the case again in 1902, when questions on this issue reached him. The first question came from Yogya, where the *mufti* there, who was responsible for such matters, had refused to change the *qibla* despite being made aware that it was incorrect.[80] A similar request came from Banjarmasin. In fact, in this last city the *mufti* had claimed that he was qualified to give an independent judgement on this (*hakim mujtahid*) and therefore he should be obeyed (pp. 2–3). As a result of these questions, at the end of 1902, Sayyid ʻUthman published his *Tahrir aqwa al-adilla fi tahsil ʻayn al-qibla*, 'The presenting of the strongest proofs for establishing the precise *qibla*.' The book was in Arabic with an abbreviated Malay rendering in the margin. On the basis of many quotes from previous authorities, Sayyid ʻUthman showed that it was compulsory to change the *qibla* to the correct direction once a mistake had been detected (pp. 6–13). Sayyid ʻUthman also dealt with the relevant technicalities for establishing the correct *qibla*, like latitudes and longitudes, and he provided an interesting chart with these data for a number of cities in the Netherlands East Indies, from Aceh in the west to Ternate in the east. On a subsequent page, a map was shown indicating the location of the Kaʻba on the Arabian peninsula in relation to the Dutch East Indies (pp. 14–15). Having explained all this, he affirmed that the *qibla* in Yogya was directed to the middle of Africa (*Ifriqiyya*) and the one in Banjarmasin towards Ethiopia (*ard al-Habasha*), 'far beyond the land of the Arabs, let alone Mecca the Venerated.' (pp. 13 – 21).[81] In conclusion, Sayyid ʻUthman stated that the *qibla* in both places should be changed. In respect of the person who had compared himself to a *mujtahid*, Sayyid ʻUthman declared that 'he is like a blacksmith comparing himself to one of the angels nearest to God,[82] and he deserves to be reprimanded and stopped' (pp. 21–22).

Sayyid ʻUthman wrote this book in the period that Snouck Hurgronje was directing the Office for Native Affairs and it is evident that both men were thinking along the same lines, because Snouck Hurgronje thought that the

80 In 1896 Ahmad Dahlan, who would later found the Muhammadiyyah, had also pointed out that this *qibla* was wrong, see E.I. (3), s.v. Dahlan, Kyai Haji Ahmad.

81 Quote on p. 19, with a map illustrating this on page 20.

82 For these angels who are called *muqarrrab*, see E.I. (2), s.v. *mala'ika.*

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*mufti* of Banjarmasin had jeopardized his integrity by refusing to change the *qibla*. For this reason Snouck proposed that the Resident of East and South Borneo should reprimand him.[83]

Apparently, the *qibla* question was hotly debated, because in almost the same period Sayyid ʿUthman published two other works on the issue. First, in 1903 Sayyid ʿUthman reprinted his work *Nafaʾis al-nakhla fi wasaʾil al-qibla*, which was mentioned in Chapter Three. Secondly, he published some works by the well-known Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari (1710–1812) on the issue.[84]

### *Posters*

As in the earlier phase of his career, Sayyid ʿUthman kept on producing *jadwal*, or posters (see Chapter Three). A number of these have already been mentioned, but Leiden University Library houses many more. I mention just two examples here, without aiming at completeness: an astronomical table from 1890, and a chart indicating the five times for prayer according to the Dutch calendar.[85] As mentioned, these posters or charts were meant to convey religious messages, but were also commercial products, like his books, which were advertised and were for sale.

## 5 Printing Activities

In addition to printing his own works, there are also a number of publications known that were written by others, but printed on the lithographic press of Sayyid ʿUthman. An interesting example of this is a book entitled *al-Qawl al-mujid*, 'The praising word,' which was written by the Shafiʿi *mufti* in Mecca, Muhammad Babasil. As we have seen, Sayyid ʿUthman had become acquainted with him in Mecca and they had stayed in touch. Indeed, from time to time, Sayyid ʿUthman asked, and usually received, support from him for his writings. In 1891, Sayyid ʿUthman published this work by his friend on his press in Batavia. The book was rather sensitive in Mecca and so was published in Batavia for political reasons. The contents of the book contained critical notes on Wahhabism and Muhammad Babasil preferred to have it printed in Batavia because he did not want to attack the Wahhabi sympathies of the Meccan Sharif ʿAwn al-Rafiq.[86]

83 Snouck Hurgronje, *Adviezen*, 842–843.

84 See below, p. 226.

85 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Posters*, no. 2 and no. 6.

86 Snouck, 'Vier geschenken,' 262–265.

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Another work that was printed at Sayyid ʻUthman's press was a booklet originally compiled in 1844 by Sayyid ʻUthman's teacher (*guru kami*) ʻAbd Allah ibn Tahir, entitled *al-Ahadith al-jamiʻa fi l-ʻulum al-nafiʻa*, 'The collected Hadiths on the useful sciences.' As mentioned on the final page, Sayyid ʻUthman printed this small collection of Prophetic sayings in 1892. In addition to the Arabic text of the edifying traditions an interlinear Malay translation was given. This suggests that this work was meant for educational purposes.

In the same year, Sayyid ʻUthman also printed a booklet by Sayyid Muhammad al-Jufri from Madura, who had also consulted Sayyid ʻUthman on various issues, as we have seen previously. The booklet dealt with the obligation to love and respect the Prophet and his descendants and was entitled *Asna al-naqulat*, 'The most beautiful citations.'[87] Another product of Sayyid ʻUthman's printing press, but not authored by him, was the *Aqidat al-ʻawamm min wajib fi l-din bi-l-tamam*, 'The comprehensive creed for the common people on the compulsory in religion.' This work was published in 1902 and was written by the Bantanese scholar Ahmad al-Marzuqi who was residing in Mecca. It is a brief catechism of ten pages, written in Arabic poetry with an interlinear Malay translation.[88]

Around 1903, Sayyid ʻUthman printed large passages from a work by the well-known Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari, entitled *Maghib al-asl*, 'The absence of the good reason.' In this text, it was mentioned that in 1772 Muhammad Arshad returned from the Holy Land to his native Banjarmasin via Batavia and it was here that the *qibla* issue had come up. During his stay in Batavia he was asked for the correct direction of the *qibla* and, in response, he produced an Arabic text on this with explanations. Sayyid ʻUthman had a handwritten copy of this text and printed a number of key passages of this manuscript with a Malay translation added. On the title page of the work it reads, in Arabic:

> These are quotations, from the treatise entitled *Maghib al-asl*, of the most erudite Shaykh Haji Muhammad Arshad al-Banjari, which he wrote in Batavia, when he was asked about the *qibla* of the mosques in that city.[89]

Thus, we see that all those works printed by Sayyid ʻUthman but authored by others, were writings on Islam by kindred spirits. They therefore served his goal

87 Ibid., 261.

88 See on al-Marzuqi, Snouck Hurgronje, *Mekka*, 273.

89 The activities of Muhammad Arshad in Batavia are mentioned on p. 1.

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of spreading of what he considered to be the proper understanding of Islam in the Netherlands East Indies.

In addition to this, I have found a few isolated examples of items that he apparently printed in order to make some money. A first example concerns a large sheet of preprinted wish cards for Lebaran.[90] Other items that fall into this category are a chart for converting Islamic dates into the Gregorian calendar for the year 1302/1885. At the top of this chart is a warning in Arabic and in Malay that one may only establish the new moon by actually seeing it (*ru'ya*), and not by calculation (*hisab*).[91] Some final examples of a more commercial nature are two small lithographed and hand-coloured posters, depicting the Great Mosque in Mecca and the Mosque of the Prophet in Medina.[92]

## 6 Books for a European Audience

As we have seen in Chapter Four, a few of Sayyid 'Uthman's works were reviewed in the colonial press, most probably by Snouck Hurgronje who aimed to make these works more widely known among the general Dutch public and also to prepare the way for a promotion of Sayyid 'Uthman within the colonial bureaucracy. It is likely that these reviews generated a demand for the works of Sayyid 'Uthman among an audience of Europeans who had mastered Malay. On 6 April 1891 the *Locomotief* announced that the works of Sayyid 'Uthman had become available through the well-known Dutch bookseller G. Kolff & Co., in Batavia. Moreover, we have seen that, on occasion, Sayyid 'Uthman published some of his works not only in the Jawi script but also in Latin characters. This demonstrates his interest in a European or Europeanized audience with some command of Malay. Around 1897, we see a Dutch language catalogue of some seventy works by Sayyid 'Uthman being brought into circulation and sold by Kolff.[93] Later, a catalogue by another well-known bookseller in Batavia, Albrecht & Co, was published.[94] On 14 December 1903, the *Bataviaasch Nieuwsblad* announced that Sayyid 'Uthman had published a catalogue of no less than 104 of his works.

These announcements in Dutch colonial newspapers show that there was an awareness that Sayyid 'Uthman's books were not only useful for a native

90 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Posters*, no. 7.

91 Ibid., no. 62.

92 Sayyid 'Uthman, 'Pictures of Mosques in Mecca and Medina.'

93 Anonymous, *Said Oesman*.

94 KITLV Library bb 94. I thank Roger Tol, former librarian of the KITLV, Leiden, for drawing my attention to this booklet.

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Muslim audience, but that they might also be profitable for the European or European oriented part of the population.[95] Sayyid ʿUthman himself was very much aware of the effects of his works on a European audience, as a passage from a letter written by Snouck Hurgronje to his friend, the German orientalist Theodor Nöldeke (1836–1930), shows. In this letter, written in Dutch in Batavia on 27 May 1902, Snouck characterized Sayyid ʿUthman as a person who liked to stress those elements in Islam that were acceptable to 'civilized *kafirs*' and who demonstrated that the 'worthier parts' of European civilization were present within Islam. All the Arabic and Malay tracts written by Sayyid ʿUthman, Snouck continued, were, in fact, intended for a European audience. Snouck ended the relevant section of the letter as follows:

> Sayyid ʿUthman does not even try to conceal this from me, and he consults me about the best formulations to make any 'explanation of the good works of the Law' as adequate and effective as possible, so that the unbelievers will achieve, if not belief in Islam, at least an appreciation of Islam, which is not a matter of indifference to the Muslims in these bad times.[96]

Although I think that Snouck's remark that all of Sayyid ʿUthman's works are written with a European audience in mind is definitely overstated, a number of his works are indeed aimed at a European audience and I will examine a number of examples in the remainder of this section.

A first example is a tiny booklet published in 1899 under the title *Lampu bercahaya menyatakan perihal dua perangai manusia*, 'The radiating lamp dealing with the two types of human character.' Sayyid ʿUthman stated in the booklet that there were two kinds of man: the prudent type, who would be rewarded, and the evil type, who would fall into misfortune. For each type he mentioned five characteristics. The prudent person likes to study; likes to earn money in an honest way; spends money on the education of his children; takes good care of his children; and has a pure faith. The evil person was precisely the opposite. At the end of the booklet he expressed his hope that it would stimulate people to lead a prudent life and to avoid an evil life (2–7).

Like other writings from this period, a transliteration of the booklet was also published in Western script by Albrecht & Co. In itself this work is not very

95 The *Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 20 October 1900 reported that at the world exhibition in Paris, alongside all kinds of government publications, various works of Sayyid ʿUthman were on display.

96 Snouck Hurgronje, *Orientalism and Islam*, 95.

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interesting, but it stands out in the oeuvre of Sayyid 'Uthman, because of the absence of any reference to Islam and Islamic texts, and because of the use of the word 'faith' (*kepercayaan*) in general. Consequently, we might wonder whether Sayyid 'Uthman perhaps wrote this booklet primarily with a European audience in mind. If this was the case, it might show that Sayyid 'Uthman apparently also had the ambition to educate not just the Muslim population, but that he also saw a role for himself in edifying the European or European oriented population in the Netherlands East Indies.

Another booklet that aims to stimulate its readers to follow God's rules is a brief and simple Malay booklet, entitled *Perkataan adil*, 'Right words.' Intriguingly, contrary to virtually all other publications by Sayyid 'Uthman, the brochure gives the date of publication according to the European calendar only; namely, 'the month October 1903.' The booklet stated that Islam ordered people to behave rightly (*adil*) in word and deed, which meant obeying God. If someone did right, Islam would reward him and it was prohibited from maltreating such a person. If a ruler (*raja*) did right, this was a great benefit for the people and, consequently, the people should be devoted to his administration (*keadilan*) (pp. 2–5). Likewise, a teacher who taught pure Islam should be loved and respected, 'as Her Majesty the Queen had done to the present writer' (p. 5). The opposite of *adil* was *zalim*, meaning 'unjust,' and such a person must be condemned (pp. 4–5). Islam forbade falling into destruction, like suicide or disobedience towards the orders of the state. Islam ordered the study of religious doctrines and obligations. This would lead to a fear of God and Hell, and due to this fear, people would behave well. For this reason, religious teachers were useful and had to be respected (pp. 5–7). Islam forbade the teaching of wrong things in order to gain financial profits or to derive prestige. On page seven, Sayyid 'Uthman mentioned some examples of this:

> Teaching how to obtain supernatural powers or to become invulnerable (*menjadi sakti atau kasen*) in order to oppose the state with amulets or with the way of the *Peyakinan* […], or the teaching of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood […], or other innovations (*bid'as*).

Individuals who taught this were bad for the country and should be despised. Moreover, Islam prohibited religious functionaries (*kepala agama*), like *qadis*, *penghulus* and *muftis*, from extorting funds from the local population, because they already received a salary from the government. When these functionnaries harassed people they were sinners (*fasiq*) and therefore not capable of performing valid legal actions, like contracting or dissolving marriages; consequently, they should be removed from their positions by the government

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(pp. 7–8). Some religious prohibitions coincided with customary prohibitions (*larangan hukum adat*), like stealing, killing, opposing the administration (*keadilan*) or teaching people the new religion; namely, the *Peyakinan* brotherhood. All these bad things were caused by the absence of a fear of God (pp. 8–9). Every human race (*bangsa*) included both evil and good people. Just because a race included evil people who, for instance, demanded interest or 'who release all kinds of reports to the newspapers in order to incriminate the government,' it did not mean that the entire race could be characterized as evil, for there were also good people from this race. Only these evil elements needed to be removed (pp. 9–10). Because the administration of the kingdom in the Netherlands East Indies exhibited justice, it could be said that it treated all its inhabitants justly and that it had guaranteed uninterrupted safety for hundreds of years. In an interesting passage Sayyid 'Uthman explicated:

> Moreover, it should be related that this administration has granted the Muslim population a number of mosques as places for worship and teaching, and that it provides the salaries of all *penghulus* to carry out the rules of Islam in the field of marriage, divorce, inheritance, prayer and teaching. All this is to provide well-being for the natives in their execution of the Islamic rules. Moreover, the government has awarded a respectable rank to the one who teaches and writes books on understanding the rules of Islam.

As a result of all this, all people should thank and love the government, no least because, at the beginning of the booklet, it was established that one should not maltreat someone who treated you well. People who had a negative attitude towards the government (*berhati jahat*), or who were stupid or who did not think about the future, were 'like thorny trees waiting in a beautiful garden until they will be removed without further ado and banished far away.' The good trees, however, would not be removed (pp. 10–12).

Many of Sayyid 'Uthman's favourite subjects are encapsulated and repeated in the *Perkataan adil*; but, as said, it is striking that the brochure is only dated according to the Dutch calendar and this begs the question of whether the booklet was perhaps primarily intended for a European audience. The fact that a transliteration in Latin script was published by G. Kolff & Co only strengthens this thought. The extremely positive remarks about the Dutch do not deviate from earlier opinions expressed by Sayyid 'Uthman; but here we have a very high concentration of praise, which also hints and the intended readership.

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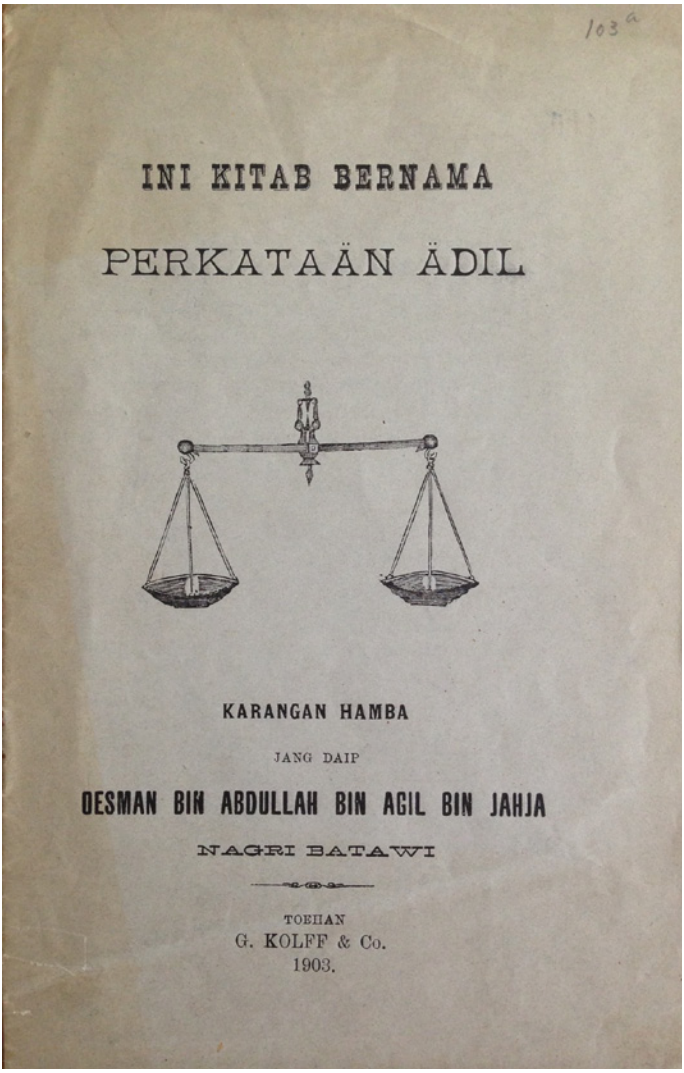


FIGURE 9 *Cover of* Perkataan adil *in Latin script*
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Another example of a work aimed at European users dealt with the establishing of the dates for the Muslim calendar, a topic on which Sayyid ʿUthman had already published extensively for a Muslim audience. This booklet was entitled *Keker bulan buat melakukan puasa dan buat lebaran*, 'The telescope to establish the beginning of the fasting month and the Lebaran Feast.' Its publication date was given according to the European calendar, 9 March 1898. This date, as well as the Dutch word '*Kijker*' (telescope) in the title, demonstrate that this

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work was meant for Europeans. This is confirmed by that fact in previous publications Sayyid ʿUthman had rejected the use of the telescope by Muslims as an instrument for establishing the beginning of the month.[97] In this Malay booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman explained, simply and briefly, the most important issues relevant to this issue; namely, that in Islam it was not allowed to establish this by calculation, as done in almanacs, and that the new moon should actually be sighted by two reliable witnesses, after which the *penghulu* could establish the date. Remarkably, a transliteration of this booklet was also published in Western script by Albrecht & Co. on the same date. Evidently, this edition was meant for a Dutch audience who knew Malay and who wanted to know when the fasting month would start and end.

A final booklet that I would like to deal with here was not primarily aimed at a European audience, but rather was written on the initiative of Europeans. It was a very small Malay brochure of eight pages, entitled *Nasihat datang buat menegah atas menyakitkan binatang*, 'Welcome advice on the prohibition of the harming of animals.' Notably, its publication date is 1899, given according to the European calendar. As is indicated by its title, this brochure was a plea to treat animals well, based on arguments from the Islamic scholarly tradition, amongst others from the work of al-Ghazali and Ibn Hajar, who both argued that it was a great sin to harm animals. In addition to religious arguments not to do so, Sayyid ʿUthman also tried to persuade his readers with practical arguments. For instance, if one overloaded his animals of burden, they decreased in value, and if one shot birds that ate worms and lice, this vermin would eat the crops. Interestingly, in order to disseminate the ideas on animal protection more widely, a poster in Malay accompanied this booklet, apparently meant for display in public places. Because this is a unique document I translate it here in full:

> This advice should be taken seriously by all people and it will be of great benefit to anyone who follows it. Firstly, it is absolutely not permitted to harm animals, just as this is not allowed with regards to man. And God is very wrathful with the certainty of a severe punishment towards a person who harms these two. Therefore, an animal, which by nature is permitted to be slaughtered, may not endure extra heavy hardship as the result of a sharp knife.[98] People who do not have mercy on man or animals will also not be pardoned by God Almighty, and people who do not receive mercy

97 In 1882, see Chapter Three, p. 80.

98 Curiously, the text reads sharp knife (*pisau tajam*), while the slaughtering with a blunt knife would harm the animal more.

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> from God Almighty will really be deprived and ruined during this life and the Afterlife. Moreover, a person who maltreats his animals increases his number of sins, and will harm himself. The cause thereof can be beating or overloading his animal beyond its strength, so that it becomes injured or lame or emaciated, as a result of which its value decreases and therefore it becomes a loss to him. Conversely, if he treats his animal well, he will definitely profit from this. Moreover, there are birds who eat worms and lice, which destroy the fruits and the leaves, and these birds are really useful for the crops and fruit as they save them from destruction by the worms and the lice. If these birds are shot with a gun or a blowpipe, the growth in number of worms and lice will destroy the crops and the fruits and the loss will be much bigger than the gains from the birds. Furthermore, other animals that are not harmful or which have inedible flesh may not be harmed.[99]

At first sight, Sayyid ʻUthman's plea for animal protection might make a strange impression. However, it fitted well with Dutch colonial attempts to improve the well-being of animals. In 1896, the Netherlands East Indies Society for the Protection of Animals (*Nederlandsche-Indische Vereeniging tot Bescherming van Dieren*) was established. In its proceedings it was established that if they were to be successful, they needed to involve indigenous religious leaders.[100] In the colonial newspaper *Het Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 20 August 1902, there was a report on a meeting of the Surabaya branch of the society. In order to disseminate its message, the society planned to involve the inspector of basic education in efforts to raise awareness about animal well-being among children. Moreover, the society planned to disseminate the above mentioned brochure by Sayyid ʻUthman and to distribute it free of charge amongst it members. A version of the brochure in Western script also appeared (Albrecht & Co., 1899), apparently meant for readers of Malay who did not know Jawi script, as well as a Javanese version, meant for a Javanese audience.[101]

99 This poster is kept in Sayyid ʻUthman, *Nasihat datang* (UBL 8190 F 12) and measures 32 × 42 cm.

100 ENI, VI, Supplement, 120–121 s.v. Dierenbescherming.

101 *Poenika serat woewoelang mrih anjandet prakawis misakit oetawi njikna chewan*, also printed by Sayyid ʻUthman in 1899. The title page mentions that the translation was produced by Mas Sastrosoebroto from Semarang.

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## 7 Conclusion

This chapter has shown that in addition to and simultaneously with his involvement in the administration as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs and a number of demanding polemics, Sayyid ʿUthman was able to write a large number of writings, both related to particular events and works of a more scholarly nature. Most of these writings were clearly meant to instruct and guide believers and do not contain new elements regarding the history of Islam in the Netherlands East Indies. However, as a reflection of Islam and Muslim life in the archipelago they are most interesting. Moreover, it appeared that Sayyid ʿUthman also published a number of works for commercial reasons and probably for a European or Europeanized audience, both in the Jawi and in Western script. These works are, however, very few in number and the central focus of his work remained the providing of religious guidance to the Muslim community.

Thus, having completed this portrait of Sayyid ʿUthman as a writer and publisher, in the following and final chapter I will deal with the last year of his life, 1913 and his death in January 1914.

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CHAPTER 8

# The Eventful Final Year of Sayyid ʻUthman's Life

## 1 Introduction

This chapter deals with the activities of Sayyid ʻUthman in 1913, which would turn out to be the final year of his life. This year witnessed the official recognition of Sarekat Islam, the first indigenous mass organization in the Netherlands East Indies, founded in 1912. Prior to this recognition, extensive debates on Sarekat Islam took place and, in spite of his advanced age (he was more than 90 years old), Sayyid ʻUthman played a prominent role in this. Moreover, other activities of Sayyid ʻUthman in this year are discussed in this chapter and, finally, his death in 18 January 1914 will be dealt with.

## 2 Sarekat Islam[1]

This mass organization was founded in early 1912 in Surakarta, building on a number of small, local initiatives to provide mutual assistance against criminals. In the first half of 1913, Sarekat Islam met with great enthusiasm among the population of Java and experienced an explosive growth. This was manifest in the mushrooming of new branches all over Java and beyond. Interestingly, in its initial phase, Sarekat Islam showed the government great respect. The latter was seen as a partner, striving for the same goal as the masses; namely, the emancipation of the indigenous population from their humble social position or, to put it in a single word, 'progress' (*kemajuan*). Although its stated aim was unequivocal, there were great differences between the various branches of Sarekat Islam, some paying more attention to mutual solidarity among the members, while others preferred to underline the element of *dakwah* in the organization.[2] An example of this can be found in the Batavia branch that

1 Much of the information on Sayyid ʻUthman and Sarekat Islam in this chapter was published earlier in Kaptein, 'Grateful to the Dutch government.' I thank Routledge Publishers for their permission to republish part of this paper here. Some changes and additions have been made.

2 The term *dakwah*, or 'Islamization of Muslims,' was not used at the time. Boland, *The struggle*, 193 states that this term only came into use in Indonesia after the colonial period from around 1960.

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must have shaped Sayyid 'Uthman's view of the nascent organization. Due to the activities of the Batavia branch of Sarekat Islam and its leader, Goenawan, attendance at the Friday prayer increased more than tenfold.[3]

An important aspect in the formative period of the movement was its attempt to obtain legal recognition from the government. This was necessary to function properly, since without this recognition gatherings by the movement could be dissolved at any time. The request for this recognition by the leaders of Sarekat Islam was heavily debated in government circles and among the European public in general, for instance in their newspapers. Many people feared the imminent emancipation of the masses, which would threaten their privileged positions, and therefore demanded an immediate and complete prohibition of the movement, if necessary by employing brute force. However, the Governor General, A.W.F. Idenburg (1861–1935), did not bow to this enormous pressure. He consulted many people and also received the Board of Sarekat Islam on 29 March 1913, before putting forward a compromise on 30 June: Idenburg gave recognition to the local, individual branches of Sarekat Islam, but disallowed the formation of one unified Sarekat Islam at a national level.[4]

Idenburg's motives for doing so, despite the huge and prevailing opposition, were partly pragmatic and partly in line with the principles of the Ethical Policy. He considered Sarekat Islam to be part of the 'Asian Awakening' and a manifestation of the new spirit of self-awareness of the native population, which was there to stay. Although he sensed that the leadership of Sarekat Islam was weak and its goals vague, he was convinced that the movement was not anti-Dutch and his intention was to preserve this characteristic. He was convinced that a prohibition of the movement would provoke anti-Dutch sentiments, and would transform the organization into a political one. The reason it took him a relatively long time to reach a decision about legal recognition was that he was waiting for a Royal Decree that would enable him to forbid organizations that posed a threat to the public order. Immediately after this decree had been promulgated, his decision concerning Sarekat Islam was announced. This Royal Decree enabled him to proscribe individual branches of Sarekat Islam should they develop anti-government sentiments. In addition to these pragmatic motives, more idealistic motives played a role in Idenburg's considerations, not least that he regarded it as a good sign that the native population had begun to stand up for its own interests and protest about official arbitrariness.[5]

3 Shiraishi, *An age in motion*, 41–90.

4 Van der Wal, *De opkomst*, 161–164

5 De Bruijn and Puchinger, *Briefwisseling Kuyper-Idenburg*, 116–118; 367–370.

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## 3 Sayyid ʿUthman and Sarekat Islam

### *Sayyid ʿUthman's Speech to the Solo Congress*

The first time Sayyid ʿUthman expressed his views on Sarekat Islam in public was during a congress of Sarekat Islam that was held in the Sriwedari Garden of the Susuhunan in Surakarta on 23 March 1913. In the weekly *Hindia Serikat*, established in Bandung by the renowned activist Abdoel Moeis in 1913 as 'the voice of the indigenous population in the Netherlands East Indies' (*soeara boeat bangsa boemi poetera di Hindia-Nederland*), the well-known journalist and Secretary of the Bandung branch of Sarekat Islam, A.H. Wignjadisastra, published a lively report of this congress, including a brief summary of the speech by Sayyid ʿUthman. In order to be able to capture the general atmosphere of the congress and to place Sayyid ʿUthman's speech in its context, I will first summarize this report.

On 22 March, the day before the congress was held, a preliminary meeting was convened in Solo and attended by people from all over Java. It was chaired by Tjokroaminoto, the Vice-President of Sarekat Islam Central Board from Surabaya, because he was proficient in Malay, unlike the chairperson of the Solo branch of Sarekat Islam who was more used to speaking Javanese.[6] In this meeting, matters were discussed including the statutes and questions about who could become a member of Sarekat Islam, who could become a member of the board as well as budgetary issues.[7] Moreover, the son of the Sunan of Solo, Prince Ngabehi, was appointed patron of the organization. According to the report in *Hindia Serikat*, by 8am on 23 March, the venue, Taman Sriwedari, was thronged. Among the 30,000 people attending[8] were numerous journalists, representatives of many branches of Sarekat Islam and civil servants such as D.A. Rinkes (1878–1954), the Deputy Advisor for Native Affairs,[9] the Assistant Resident of Solo, as well as Sayyid ʿUthman, the 'advisor on Arab affairs' (*adviseur perkara orang Arab*). The first speaker was Tjokroaminoto who pointed out that, as a result of Sarekat Islam, the economic activities of the small people (*orang kecil*) had increased, as had general safety. He suggested that this clearly showed that Sarekat Islam had proved its worth as an organization. Tjokroaminoto added that legal recognition of Sarekat Islam was

6 This suggests that Tjokro's rise to prominence within Sarekat Islam might also have had to do with his mastery of Malay. On Malay as the language of the movement, see Shiraishi, *An age in motion*, 62–64.

7 For example, the question of whether or not Sarekat Islam's funds should be put in a bank, because a bank provided interest which was against Islamic law.

8 According to the Dutch historian Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, 24, the estimates of the number of people who attended differed from 7,000 to 20,000.

9 Suminto, *Politik Islam Hindia Belanda*, 132–138.

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imminent. After his speech, the Dutch flag was hoisted and praise for the Queen, her husband Prince Hendrik, the Kingdom of the Netherlands and the Sunan of Solo was expressed. After Tjokroaminoto, Sayyid 'Uthman took to the stage. The audience was curious to learn what he ('the *mufti*') had to say, because he was known as a traditionalist Muslim (*seorang santri Kaoem Koeno*) who had been in conflict with the Arab modernists (*Kaoem Moeda*) in Batavia about the organization of the Arab school in Tanah Abang, which he did not approve of being managed in a European style. Moreover, he was known for, among other issues, his rejection of European dress.[10]

The full text of this speech has been preserved in the archives of the Advisor for Native Affairs, G.A.J. Hazeu. At the beginning of his speech, Sayyid 'Uthman introduced himself as the man

> who had been accorded the rank of *Mufti* of Islam and that of *Mahdi al-anam* (the One who gives Correct Guidance to the People) by the '*ulama*', as well as the rank of Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs by the government.

After uttering the conventional praise of Allah, he mentioned that he had come, at the request of Tjokroaminoto, to clarify the position of Islam. He stated that Islam was good and useful to those who followed its rules, and forbade the causing of offence to oneself, to others and to the state. Moreover, Islam prescribed the reciprocation of good for good. Sarekat Islam generated nothing but good and did no harm to the state. For this reason, people should be grateful to Sarekat Islam. Moreover, people should express their gratitude to the Sunan for having established Sarekat Islam.[11] Furthermore, the board of Sarekat Islam should be thanked for promoting the observance of the duties of Islam and for preventing the trespassing of prohibitions of Islam. Consequently, it promoted well-being, it safeguarded against misery, and brought 'progress and profit in this world and the Hereafter' (*kemajuan dan keuntungan dunya akhira*). Subsequently, Sayyid 'Uthman besought God to lead the policy of

10 Wignjadisastra, 'Congres Sarekat Islam di Solo.'

11 It was a common misunderstanding in the early days of Sarekat Islam that the Sunan of Solo was the founder of Sarekat Islam. Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, 81–83 links this to messianic expectations that were in circulation at the time. Shiraishi, *An age in motion*, 66–67, maintains that Sarekat Islam was the cause of this millenarianism, since its rise really shook the traditional Dutch-Javanese hierarchical order; for example, as a result of its acceptance of natives being allowed to sit on chairs, and the mingling of different social strata in meetings, and so forth.

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Sarekat Islam to perfection. The final passage of this speech is most interesting and reads, in translation, as:

> Moreover, all of us should be grateful to the just administration of the Dutch government, which displays justice and solicitude. We may happily carry out our religious obligations without interference; yes, it even supports us abundantly in our wish to perform our religious obligations by paying the salaries of the Muslim judges (*penghulus*) of the Religious Courts, and by closing down the Native Courts during the month of fasting, and by assisting in enlarging the mosques and other favours to which we have referred in our writings and in our prayer for Her Majesty the Queen.[12]

According to the report in *Hindia Serikat*, after Sayyid 'Uthman's speech, the atmosphere was rather rowdy as many had not been able to hear him because his voice was weak. For this reason, his lecture was read out again by Hasan Soerati.[13] After Sayyid 'Uthman a number of other people gave speeches. Of these, another Arab, Sayyid Ahmad ibn Muhammad al-Musawa, the President of the Arab Club '*Moeroatul Ikhwan*' in Surabaya, also pledged his full loyalty to the Dutch government. While placing his hand on the Dutch flag he said: 'This is the flag that protects us with justice,' which inspired many people to shout: 'Long live Queen Wilhelmina!' The report concluded with mentioning that the congress ended at noon.[14]

Everything points to an amazingly pro-Dutch atmosphere during this congress, among the speakers and all those present. This can be explained to some extent by the fact that Sarekat Islam was awaiting the decision of the government with regard to its request for legal recognition. It is not surprising that it did not want to undermine this request by voicing anti-Dutch sentiments. More importantly, however, was the display of genuine appreciation for the government's Ethical Policy during this period, which, like Sarekat Islam, aimed to improve the living conditions of the native population. In view of this generally positive attitude towards the government, Sayyid 'Uthman's speech

12 'Various documents about Sarekat Islam,' 84–85. For an almost full translation, see Laffan, *The makings*, 197–8.

13 Wignjadisastra, 'Congres Sarekat Islam di Solo.' On Hasan Soerati, see Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive,' 31. He was of Indian origin and living in Surabaya. He was the head of the N.V. Setija Oesaha publishers and accountant at the Oetoesan Hindia. He was regarded as the commercial mastermind behind Sarekat Islam.

14 Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive,' 32; Kartodirdjo, *Sarekat Islam lokal*, 342–343.

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will not have been perceived as controversial. Indeed, we see that the ideas expressed in the speech were quite influential.

On 29 March a meeting between Governor General Idenburg and the Central Committee of Sarekat Islam took place during which the committee clarified its request for the legal recognition of their organization. The main points of Sayyid 'Uthman's speech, i.e. the government's non-interference in religious matters and its facilitation of religion, were used in the preparation for this meeting. This is apparent from an undated, handwritten document that is kept in the Hazeu archives. This document is dated between the Solo congress, which took place on 23 March and the 29 March meeting. The document is headed with the sentence: 'Request for the judgement of the government on four points from the grateful indigenous population.' The first point underlined the gratitude felt by the indigenous population (*bumiputra*) towards the government for not interfering in religious matters; the second point elaborated on this by mentioning government support for performing the *salat*, building mosques and in facilitating Muslim marriages and inheritance cases. Thirdly, the government was thanked for its protection of the lives, property and religion of the population. Fourthly, the government was thanked for its appreciation of the promotion of welfare among the people. Then, the *bumiputra* asked the government to view Sarekat Islam against the background of these four points. They asked the government to confirm the principle set out in the first point; the second point requested that it expanded on this. Following the third point, recognition (*permisi*) of Sarekat Islam was solicited, on the basis that the organization was beneficial to the state, since its activities had resulted in a decline in theft and robbery and an increase in industry (*kerajinan*) and decent behaviour among the people. Turning to the fourth point, it was emphasized that the document underlined that the government policy of suppressing wickedness coincided with the aims of Sarekat Islam.

These same four considerations were taken up again and revised in another undated document that is also kept in the same file of the Hazeu archives. This second document was apparently meant for wider circulation among Sarekat Islam members because it was lithographed. Its text more or less follows the same arguments, stressing the benefits to the government of the rise in religiosity among Sarekat Islam members. It ends with the following observation: 'If there is no awe of God, the less awe there will be of the power of the state.'[15] It is not clear whether these documents were prepared by Sayyid 'Uthman, but it is evident that the arguments used originated from him.

15 'Various documents about Sarekat Islam,' 82–83. Laffan, *The makings*, 198 provides a translation of this document.

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Sayyid 'Uthman's ideas on Sarekat Islam were also disseminated beyond Java. An interesting illustration of this is that the full text of his Solo speech was included in the reformist journal *al-Munir*, published in Padang, West Sumatra. This text was sent to the editors from Batavia by a certain Tengku Muhammad Nur al-Din.[16]

### *Sayyid 'Uthman's Writings on Sarekat Islam*

After his Solo speech, Sayyid 'Uthman produced a number of writings on Sarekat Islam and these will be studied in this section. All of these writings were written in Malay and, thus, addressed the native population, while being accessible to Europeans with a command of the language. Moreover, they were written prior to the decision of Idenburg on the recognition of Sarekat Islam on 30 June 1913, and therefore give an insight into local discussions on Sarekat Islam among the native population. The first relevant document is a handwritten *fatwa*, in Malay, about Sarekat Islam. The document is signed by Sayyid 'Uthman and dated 7 April 1913. The individuals who requested this *fatwa* are listed as: Haji Imam Mahbub ibn Imam 'Abd al-Hamid; Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Alwi al-Salabiyyah; Haji Ilyas Tanah Abang; the District *penghulu*, Haji Shu'ayb; Haji Hasan, a religious teacher (*guru mengaji*); Shaykh 'Uthman, the master of the Arab quarter (*wijkmeester* Arab); Haji Tabarani, the Chief *penghulu Landraad*; Raden Muhammad Tahir, a teacher in Jati Negara, 'and others.' From the functions mentioned we may infer that the issue of Sarekat Islam had become a matter of debate at all levels of the religious establishment in Batavia.

The request for the *fatwa* consists of four sub-questions. It commences with a general question on the nature of Sarekat Islam. Secondly, it raises the question of how Sarekat Islam should be judged from the point of view of the Shari'a and in light of its advice to members to adhere to the rules of Islam, like praying, studying, fasting, leading a pious (*halal*) life, as well as the duty requiring members to stimulate each other to live according to the Shari'a and respect the order (*keselamatan*) of the state, and abandoning forbidden matters, like charging interest, gambling and bearing false evidence. The third question raises the issue of oath taking.[17] If it is possible to undertake lawful matters only under oath, is this oath then compulsory? The fourth and final question

16 *al-Munir* 4–3 (22 April 1913): 49–50. I thank Jajat Burhanudin for this reference.

17 This practice of Sarekat Islam possibly originated in Chinese secret societies, which were the precursors of some local Sarekat Islam branches. This aspect of Sarekat Islam, as well as other secret signs, caused the government to be highly suspicious; see Rinkes, 'Zeer geheime missive,' 37–39; Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, 185–189.

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deals with the issue of Qur'an recitations performed over water,[18] or above a patient in order to heal him.

Before arriving at a direct answer to these four questions, Sayyid 'Uthman set out to explain a number of general points that formed the background to his answer. In dealing with these points, Sayyid 'Uthman underlined, amongst other things, that a Muslim should obey the rules of Islam, and stimulate other Muslims to do the same and not harm the state. Obedience to the rules of Allah would lead to reward in this world and in the Hereafter. Likewise, a Muslim was obliged to avoid matters that Allah had prohibited, like omitting the *salat* and the fasting, and asking for interest. Should a Muslim not comply with these prohibitions, he would be severely punished in the Afterlife. Every Muslim had the duty to remind other Muslims of these orders and prohibitions. Islam prescribed fraternity (*kesaudaraan*) and solidarity (*bertolong-tolongan*), as was clearly expressed in the Qur'anic verses: 'The believers are brothers' (Qur'an 49: 10) and 'Assist each other in piety and devotion' (Qur'an 5: 2), while the act of prohibiting others from doing evil and reminding others to do well was prescribed in two Prophetic sayings. Furthermore, Sayyid 'Uthman mentioned that if something that was compulsory could only be undertaken by performing another matter, then this other matter was also compulsory. The eleventh and final point underlined that the Qur'an stipulated that the reciting of the Qur'an purified the heart and cured the sick, as was illustrated in the verse 'And we send down parts from the Qur'an that are a cure and blessing for the believers' (Qur'an 17: 82).

Following this elaboration, Sayyid 'Uthman answered the four questions addressed to him. In response to the first question, Sayyid 'Uthman stated that Sarekat Islam conformed to Islam, in the sense that it stimulated people to obey the prescriptions and prohibitions of Islam. The second question was answered by referring to his remarks stating that members were obliged to remind each other to be a good Muslim and to show solidarity, both of which were obligatory qualities for a Muslim. In his third response, Sayyid 'Uthman mentioned that the oath was a prerequisite for all the good things Sarekat Islam brought and was, therefore, compulsory. Finally, Sayyid 'Uthman stated that, in view of the above mentioned verse, there was no objection to drinking water over which Qur'anic verses had been recited. In general, Sayyid 'Uthman regarded Sarekat Islam as a beneficial organization because it promoted reli-

18 The drinking of a glass of water was part of the oath taking ceremony, Korver, *Sarekat Islam*, 186.

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gious life and stimulated people to change their ways from those of evil people to those of good people who felt satisfied with the government.[19]

Some three weeks later, Sayyid ʿUthman revisited many of these points in a separate brochure in Malay. As we have seen in other instances, a particular issue often started with a request for a *fatwa* from Sayyid ʿUthman. Subsequently, he would elaborate the issue in a more general way in a separate publication. On this occasion, the brochure in question was entitled *Selampai tersulam*, 'The embroidered scarf,' and was published on 3 May 1913. In the first section (*fasal*), Sayyid ʿUthman set out to explain that Islam consisted of prescriptions and prohibitions that a Muslim was obliged to follow. Should a person not comply with this, he would be 'convicted by the state' (*dapat hukuman negeri*) (p. 3) in this life and receive a severe punishment in the Afterlife. The second section stated that Sarekat Islam complied with the rules of Islam, while the third section explained that 'the aim of Sarekat Islam is neither to go on strike, nor to boycott a particular ethnic group'[20] (*tiadalah ada maksudnya karena bermogok daripada pekerjahan atau memboykot-boykot pada lain bangsa*) (p. 6). On the contrary, the members of Sarekat Islam were expected to behave properly and, to ensure this, the board of Sarekat Islam should consist of wise men. Finally, in the fourth section, the blessings of Sarekat Islam were summed up: more people were performing the s*alat*; so much so that all the mosques were full, religion was being studied in more places, many shops had already been opened and there was less theft and robbery. As a result of this, Sayyid ʿUthman concluded that the advantages of Sarekat Islam for the state were obvious.[21]

The *Selampai tersulam* was reprinted with lead type by the Setia Usaha Press in Surabaya, shortly after its original printing date of 3 May 1913. This suggests that the opinions of Sayyid ʿUthman concerning Sarekat Islam were also popular in Surabaya.[22]

Apparently, the discussions about Sarekat Islam continued and, approximately a month and a half later, Sayyid ʿUthman published another pamphlet about the organization, entitled *Sinar astraallamp*, 'The beams of the astral lamp.'[23] On the title page it is stated that the text was written 'to explain the

19 Sayyid ʿUthman, '*Fatwa* on Sarekat Islam.' Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje,' 4 October 1913, mentioned that he had disseminated many copies of this *fatwa* in print.

20 Obviously, the Chinese are mentioned here.

21 Sayyid ʿUthman, *Selampai tersulam.*

22 At that time, the Setia Usaha was still in the hands of Hasan Soerati, before it came under the control of Tjokroaminoto, see Shiraishi, *An age in motion*, 54.

23 I owe this reading of the Jawi *'strl'm* to Wieringa, 'Mecca has spoken,' 654. The Dutch word *astraallamp* designates a special type of oil lamp, see *Java-Bode*, 9 May 1896.

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truth about Sarekat Islam,' that it was published in Batavia on 16 June 1913, and that its price was ten cents. The pamphlet aimed to refute the objections to Sarekat Islam from three sides, the most virulent objectors being the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood.[24] These objections consisted of a *fatwa* stating that Sarekat Islam was useless; secondly, the assertion that Sarekat Islam was a Christian organization and that the water used during the oath taking ceremony was baptismal water (*air Nasrani*); and thirdly, the assertion that Sarekat Islam consisted of nothing but evil. Sayyid 'Uthman was asked to give a legal opinion about these three points and, consequently, he wrote this brochure in order to remove all doubt about Sarekat Islam.

In the first section of the *Sinar astraallamp* (pp. 3–5) he proved that Sarekat Islam was profitable by quoting three texts. The first of these was a Prophetic tradition that reads: 'Whosoever calls for the true path, he will receive a reward for this, as well as the rewards from those who follow this [true path].' The second proof consisted of a verse from the Qur'an that reads: 'And who is better in speech than he who calls [for obedience] to God and does right' (Qur'an 41: 33). The third proof for the benefit of Sarekat Islam was another Qur'anic verse: 'Help each other in piety and devotion' (Qur'an 5: 2). These three texts indicated precisely what Sarekat Islam stood for, and hence the first objection was refuted. In the second section of the brochure (pp. 6–7), Sayyid 'Uthman proved that the members of Sarekat Islam would receive great benefits on the basis of the Qur'anic verse,

> But what the believers will say when they are called to God and His Messenger in order that He will judge between them, is: 'We hear and we obey', and those are the successful (Qur'an 24: 51).

The same point was proved by a Prophetic tradition that reads: 'If one accepts it and is grateful, he is counted among the believers.' In this same section, the allegation that Sarekat Islam members were Christian was refuted by the Prophetic saying 'Whosoever calls a Muslim an unbeliever, is one himself' (Arab. *man kaffara Musliman fa-qad kafara*). In the third section of the *Sinar astraallamp* (pp. 7–12) Sayyid 'Uthman tackled the issue of the oath that members of Sarekat Islam were required to swear. Sarekat Islam had made this oath compulsory so that its members would actively continue to respect the religious obligations and prohibitions. Its critics asserted that the swearing of this oath was forbidden, because the Prophet had said: 'There is no oath in Islam.' How-

24 I have not been able to identify any of these opponents.

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ever, according to Ibn al-Athir (1149–1210)[25] in his *Kitab al-nihaya*, and al-Suyuti in his book *al-Durr al-manthur*, there were two meanings of the term oath in the pre-Islamic era: the first referred to a promise to kill and to rob, and oath in this sense was forbidden by the Prophet; secondly, it referred to a promise to promote the truth and to assist the oppressed, and oath in this sense was not forbidden by the Prophet, but rather was greatly encouraged. This betrayed that the *fatwa* that adduced this objection was based on ignorance and did not originate from reliable *ʿulama'*, as it ignored that the Prophet had said: 'Knowledge is based on teaching' (Arab. *innama al-ʿilm bi-l-taʿlim*). According to Sayyid ʿUthman, the mere reading of books without the guidance of a teacher was not enough, as was illustrated by a statement by Ibn Hajar. Moreover, he quoted the Prophetic saying: 'One who issues a *fatwa* without knowledge will be cursed by the angels of Heaven and Earth.' In this section of the brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman also discussed the allegation that Sarekat Islam was Christian and the water used was baptismal water. To refute these accusations, he again quoted the Prophetic saying already mentioned: 'Whosoever calls a Muslim an unbeliever, is one himself.' Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman remarked that these allegations should not be taken seriously because they originated from the circles of the Naqshabandiyya brotherhood. In order to understand the iniquity of this brotherhood, Sayyid ʿUthman referred his readers to two treatises he had written on the subject; namely, *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya* and *al-Nasiha al-aniqa*.[26] In general, it would be impossible to claim that Sarekat Islam consisted of nothing but wickedness because, as a result of the activities of Sarekat Islam, many people were now performing the *salat*; many people were refraining from sin; there was less theft and robbery; and many people had grown more industrious in striving to lead a pious life. In the fourth section (pp. 12–13), Sayyid ʿUthman stressed that people should not issue false *fatwas* and should not offer or accept bribes.[27] The fifth and final section of the *Sinar astraallamp* (pp. 13–16) is the most interesting because it shows Sayyid ʿUthman's attitude towards the colonial government. It stated that every Muslim should reciprocate the good deeds of the people who had treated them well. This principle was illustrated by the Prophetic saying 'Whosoever confers a benefit upon you, should be repaid by you' (Arab. *man asda ilaykum maʿrufan fa-kafi'u-hu*). Interestingly, Sayyid ʿUthman elaborated on this point by indicating the benefits of

25 Scholar from Mosul, Iraq (1149–1210), famous for his dictionary of difficult words in the Prophetic tradition literature, see E.I. (2), iii, 723–4.

26 Both treatises were dealt with in Chapter Four, pp. 106 and 110.

27 Once again Sayyid ʿUthman is directing himself to a personal opponent whom he utterly despises. I do not know who this is.

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'the just administration of the Dutch government for those who live in the shelter of its Kingdom' (Malay *keadilan governemen Hulanda kepada yang berteduh dibawah kerajahannya*). Since this passage is central to understanding Sayyid 'Uthman's attitude towards the government I translate this in its entirety:

> It is necessary for us to remember duly the goodness of this government, which manifests itself in a huge number of ways. The first and most important of these is the contract (*kuntrak*) with the government that there will be no interference in religious matters, with the agreement of all local rulers, which implies that a Muslim is not forbidden to behave in a religious manner. Moreover, this goodness is also manifest in giving satisfaction to the Muslim population who show religious behaviour by paying the salaries of the Muslim judges (*penghulus*) of the Islamic Courts (*raad agama*), and by giving the officials of the mosques and the religious teachers the opportunity (*perai*)[28] [ to do their tasks], and by supporting the building of mosques, and by recessing the Native Courts (*landraad*) during the month of Ramadan, and by other forms of goodness that are born of sympathy and generosity towards the inhabitants of the country for hundreds of years.

Sayyid 'Uthman's conclusion was that Muslims should repay this generosity by showing gratitude to the administration and never trespassing its prohibitions. This would guarantee that the government would live up to the agreement that it would not interfere in religious matters.[29]

Another unique document is not dated, but must have been drawn up after the *Sinar astraallamp*, as evidenced by a letter written by Sayyid 'Uthman to C. Snouck Hurgronje on 4 October 1913.[30] This document is a small poster (42 × 51cm), printed in a large font, consisting of 'Advice' (*nasihat*) in Malay from Sayyid 'Uthman. The copy that I have seen is kept in the KITLV archives in Leiden and bears a handwritten note, in Arabic, which reads: 'This is what the government (*al-dawla*) had printed and ordered to be hung on the doors of the mosques.' I translate this text as follows:

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28 Wieringa, 'Mecca has spoken,' 655 reads *pidia*, as the Batavian pronunciation of Arabic *fidya*, to indicate compensation to the mosque staff and the teachers. However, this Arabic term is never used in this way. Moreover, the Malay texts clearly reads the letter *ra'* and not the *dal*.

29 Sayyid 'Uthman, *Sinar astraallamp*. Quote on pp. 14–15.

30 This letter will be discussed below, p. 251.

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اين نصيحة در فد سيد عثمان دڠن منورة اكام دان دڠن برسي هاتي فد نكري

نصيحتن اين دڠن مڤتاكن دان مڠرتيكن كفد اورڠ٢ يڠ بلون مڠتهوي اكن فريحل شركة اسلام دان بلون مڠرتي افا مقصودث

برمول كتهوي اوله كامو بهوساث تربيتن شركة اسلام دان مقصودث مك اداله ايت دڠن دوا فركار يڠ ترسبوة د باوا اين

فرتام٢ مقصودث اكن ممبري نصيحة كفد اورڠ٢ اسلام اكن برتولو٢ڠن اتس مڠرجاكن فرض اكام دڠن برسمبهيڠ دان مڠاجي اتورن كواجبن اكام يڠ دوا٢ث اين تياد ادا فداث سواة كجهتن اتس نكري اتو اتس لاين هاث مقصودث سوفاي مندافت كريضاءن الله تعالى دان سلامة در فد سكساث

كدوا مقصود شركة اسلام ممبري نصيحة كفد بومي فترا اكن برتولو٢ڠن فد مڠرجاكن فرض اكام اكن منچاري كهيدفن يڠ حلال سوفاي دافت سلامة در فد ملارت كمسكينن دان دافت ترلفس در فد كهيناءن

مك دڠن دوا فركار اين د هارف تروس كبجيكن شركة اسلام فد نكري مله٢ سوده دافت كليانن فرڬونهنن فد نكري

سباكي لاكي كتهوي اوله كامو بهوساث بوكن مقصود شركة اسلام سوفاي ليد٢ شركة اسلام منجدي براني اتو بسر كفالا اتو ممبواة سواة كجهتن مك جاڠن سكالي٢ ادا يڠ سڠكا بكيتو روفا. دان جاڠن سكالي٢ فولاء ادا يڠ منمبه كلاكوان يڠ تياد د كهندا كين اوله شركة اسلام. مله٢ايت ممبوسوتكن نام شركة اسلام. مك اورڠيڠ ممبواة فربواتن اين مك ايالة سهاج يڠ فاتوة د تكه اتسن جوا اداث

سيّد عثمان

FIGURE 10 *Poster in support of Sarekat Islam*
KITLV, LEIDEN

Advice from Sayyid ʿUthman in line with religion and with a pure heart towards the state (*negeri*).

This advice is an explanation and clarification for those people who do not yet know what Sarekat Islam is and who do not yet understand what its aims are.

To start with, you should be aware that the rise of Sarekat Islam and its aims consist of the two matters mentioned below.

Firstly, its goal is to advise the Muslim population to assist each other (*bertolong-tolongan*) in carrying out the obligations of religion in performing the *salat* and in giving instruction on the rules of religious obligations, neither of which do any harm to the government (*negeri*) or

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anything else. The sole aim is to obtain the favour of Almighty God and to safeguard against His Punishment.

Secondly, the aim of Sarekat Islam is to advise the indigenous population (*bumiputra*) to assist each other in carrying out the obligations of religion in order to strive for a pious life (*kehidupan halal*), so that protection against the spread of poverty will be obtained, as well as freedom from inferiority.

Given these two matters, we trust that Sarekat Islam will remain loyal (*kebajikan*) towards the government and that it will reveal its benefits to the government even more than it has done already.

Moreover, you must know that it is not the aim of Sarekat Islam that its members become aggressive or arrogant or do anything harmful. Any suspicion of this kind is absolutely out of order! Likewise, this conduct is abhorrent to Sarekat Islam. On the contrary, it discredits the name of Sarekat Islam. People who behave like this should be stopped from doing so.

[signed] Sayyid 'Uthman[31]

Via this poster, Sayyid 'Uthman spread his ideas directly to the Muslim population and so this medium was of the utmost importance.

In a government report on Sarekat Islam, one of the compilers, A.J.N. Engelenberg, mentioned in his preliminary remarks on Sarekat Islam from 6 June 1913 that, in his view, Sayyid 'Uthman had misinterpreted the movement and had not understood that it was preparing itself for an economic and political struggle, while religion was not more that a binding element. In his contact with Engelenberg on Sarekat Islam, Sayyid 'Uthman had explained to him verbally that the uttering of Qur'anic verses over the water that was used during the oath taking was common and that people often came to him to obtain water, over which Qur'anic verses had been recited, to use for curing diseases. Moreover, Sayyid 'Uthman added that there was no harm in this practice, as long as one also took the necessary medicines, for he thought that just praying was not enough; he also believed that one had to work for it, using the Dutch saying '*werkt en bidt*' (work and pray).[32]

31 This document was discovered in a file with other documents in the KITLV library in Leiden in the autumn of 2004. This file probably originates from the personal library of Snouck Hurgronje. I thank Sirtjo Koolhof, former KITLV librarian, for drawing my attention to these materials, and the permission to reproduce this document.

32 'Engelenberg, Steinmetz en Hoofdpanghoeloe van Bandoeng over de Sarikat-Islam,' 22, 40. Engelenberg had been Resident in Jambi and at the time this report was written he

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As we have seen, Sayyid ʿUthman's opinions on Sarekat Islam were widely known in government circles and among the population of Java and beyond. Sayyid ʿUthman's approval of Sarekat Islam was even noted in the Jawa colony in Mecca.[33] In this context, it is noteworthy that all of Sayyid ʿUthman's written materials on Sarekat Islam discussed in this section were produced prior to the decision by Idenburg on 30 June 1912, the date that the organization was officially recognized. Therefore, these materials undoubtedly played a role in framing official and public opinions about this organization.

## 4 The Last Concerns and Activities of Sayyid ʿUthman

### *Admonishing the Arabs*

The *Qamar al-zaman* (stanzas 182–186) mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman continued to give admonitions until the end of his life. This is confirmed by a number of short brochures written by Sayyid ʿUthman in the last months of his life. From these brochures it appears that he was greatly concerned with the growing disrespect towards the Family of the Prophet, in particular by certain *sayyids*, as evidenced by their rejection of the principle of *kafa'a* when marrying off their daughters (*sharifas*). In the last four months or so before his death he devoted three small Arabic brochures to this issue.

The first of these was entitled *Mir'at al-haqq wa-l-insaf fi huquq al-sada al-ashraf*, 'The mirror of the truth and justice on the rights of the noble *sayyids*,' and was published on 19 September 1913. At the beginning of this booklet, Sayyid ʿUthman asked God's approval for his booklet and also God's acceptance of the prayer that his teacher ʿAbd Allah ibn Tahir had made for him in 1850, when Sayyid ʿUthman was just beginning his career.[34] Apparently, Sayyid ʿUthman felt the end of his career was near and by quoting this prayer he closed the circle. In the *Mir'at al-haqq* he stressed the virtues of the Family of the Prophet and the respect they deserve; he mentioned that the great ʿAlawi scholars did not permit the *sayyids* to deviate from the *kafa'a* principle in marrying off their daughters; that they prohibited people from treating the *sayyids* disrespectfully and forbade the *sayyids* from behaving arrogantly due to their noble descent (pp. 2–16).

---

was in Batavia, before he became Resident in Banka; on 25 March he also gave a lecture on the Asian awakening in The Hague, see *Nieuws van den Dag voor Nederlandsch-Indië*, 25 March and 24 July 1913.

33 Muhammad Hasan ibn Qasim, *Nasihat al-arham*, 5.

34 The prayer is again quoted in full; for the translation, see Chapter Two, p. 65.

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A few days later, on 22 September 1913, Sayyid ʿUthman devoted an entire brochure to this marriage issue, entitled *Qawl al-haqq bi-l-basira fi anna al-mujtari' khabith al-sarira*, 'The true and insightful word stating that the audacious one has a wicked heart.' In this writing, he stated that someone who permitted a marriage without complying with the principle of *kafa'a* committed a sin. In his brochure he quoted a number textual statements from scholars confirming this point of view, notably *fatwas* from his teacher ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar and from Sayyid ʿAbd al-Rahman, the author of the *Bughyat al-mustarshidin*, who stated that the marriage of a *sharifa* to a non-*sayyid* was only allowed under very particular circumstances, when there was a well-founded fear for adultery ('like the consuming of meat that was not slaughtered according the Islamic rules (*mayta*) for someone who is forced to do so').[35]

In another brochure, which was probably the last thing that Sayyid ʿUthman ever wrote, he once more addressed the position of the *sayyids*. This text was entitled *Iʿlan al-ikhwan bi-wujub al-tabligh wa-l-tadhkir bi-l-ihsan*, 'The notification to the brothers about the obligation to preach and to admonish in a good manner.' In it, again he severely condemned the *sayyids* who disregarded the principle of *kafa'a* when marrying off their daughters. He argued that this showed a lack of esteem for the Family of the Prophet and also for the Prophet himself. In the booklet the audience ('O, brother') was reminded that this behaviour was caused by a negligence of the obligations related to death and the grave and that it led to isolation from the Arab community. At the end of the brochure, Sayyid ʿUthman asked, rhetorically, what a person who had committed these sins would say to the two angels of death upon their questioning of him in the grave about his evil deeds. Sayyid ʿUthman published this brochure in October 1913, which was only three months prior to his death.

An undated document, which originates from the very end of Sayyid ʿUthman's life, is entitled *Nasihat bapa' yang sayang pada anak-anaknya*, 'Advice of a father who is concerned with his children.' This very short and very simple Malay text mentions that it was an admonition coming from an old person (*orang tua*) who regarded every Muslim who wanted to read or to listen to the text as his child. The reason for writing it was his concern for the welfare (*keselamatan*) of his children. This welfare related not only to the well-being of the body in this world, but also to the freedom of punishment in the Hereafter. This welfare was a grace from God and could be obtained by following His commandments and prohibitions as prescribed in the Qur'an. Whosoever

35 The *Bughyat al-mustarshidin* is a collection of *fatwas* compiled by the Hadrami *mufti* Sayyid ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Muhammad ibn Husayn ibn ʿUmar Baʿalawi around 1835, see E.I. (2), i, 829, s.v. Ba ʿAlawi.

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believed in God would be rewarded in Paradise and those who committed sins would end up in Hell (pp. 1–7). The text was of a very general nature and did not contain any reference or clue to debates that Sayyid ʿUthman had been involved in. As we have seen earlier, sometimes Sayyid ʿUthman referred to himself as the father of the Arabs, but here the term father might have been used in a more general sense. Indeed, it is possible that the booklet was addressing children, who were spoken to from time to time with 'O, my children' (*hai anakku*).

### *A Final Letter to Leiden*

In the last phase of his life, apart from the misconduct of the Arabs, Sayyid ʿUthman also had Sarekat Islam on his mind. This is illustrated by a private letter he sent from Batavia to Snouck Hurgronje, his former superior in the Office for Native Affairs, in Leiden on 4 October 1913. In this letter Sayyid ʿUthman looked back on the whole issue in the following manner:

> As far as the news about Sarekat Islam is concerned, we looked into this carefully after we had heard about it, and we have not ceased to do so, when its leaders from Solo asked by telegraph about our coming, as well as that of Mister Rinkes. Thereupon, all of us went to Solo where we found around 30,000 or more people. Their leader Tjokroaminoto gave a speech in Javanese and in Malay. After this, I was requested to deliver a speech, which I did, and my speech was reported in the newspapers.
>
> Then, the people from Batavia asked me about Sarekat Islam's cause and I replied to their question having consulted with Mr. Hazeu and Mr. Rinkes. I gave them my answer and I printed many copies thereof.
>
> Next, I printed the brochure *Selampai tersulam*. After they had slandered and contested Sarekat Islam's cause, as a result of the intrigues of those who hated it, I wrote the brochure *Sinar astraallamp*. Both brochures I have enclosed with this letter.
>
> When we observed the riff-raff undertaking actions directed against the goal of Sarekat Islam, we prepared a declaration and we asked the government to print it and to order it to be hung on the doors of the mosques, which was done. This has also been included in this letter along with the two brochures.[36]

36 As mentioned above, the KITLV's copy of this poster has a handwritten note on it which indicates that the document was meant to be hung on the doors of the mosque. Most probably, this KITLV copy is the one that Sayyid ʿUthman sent to Snouck.

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> Whenever we have written a brochure or anything else, we have appealed to the board (*bistiyur*) or the Secretary (?) [of Sarekat Islam] for advice, but they did not respond because of the shortcomings and betrayal of some, or even the majority, of the members of the board.
>
> At the moment, Sarekat Islam is in great flux and we do not know what its fate will be. God willing, the facts will reach you from our parts.[37]

This letter is noteworthy, not only because it was the last letter Sayyid ʿUthman wrote to Snouck before he died three and a half months later, but also because it shows how the government was actively involved in fostering the pro-government attitude within Sarekat Islam by financing and disseminating printed materials. Moreover, it is important to note that in this letter to Snouck Sayyid ʿUthman claimed that he had consulted the leadership of the Office for Native Affairs before delivering his *fatwa* on Sarekat Islam.

## 5 The Death of Sayyid ʿUthman

In the last months of 1913 Sayyid ʿUthman appears to have fallen ill, because there are reports that was he had taken to his sick-bed for several months.[38] Sayyid ʿUthman eventually died the evening of Sunday, 18 January 1914. Since he had occupied the important position of Muslim religious leader for so long, his death was also reported as a matter of course in the press.

The Dutch colonial newspaper the *Java-Bode* of Monday, 19 January 1914 reported briefly on the front page that 'the Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs' Sayyid ʿUthman had died the previous day. In the same report it was mentioned that he had been instrumental in assisting government officials to manage conflicts within the Arab community and that he had been invaluable in this sense, as a result of which he had been awarded the Nederlandse Leeuw. The report ended by mentioning that the funeral would take place later that afternoon. The next day, 20 January, the *Java-Bode* published a lengthier obituary, entitled 'The old Habib.' In this (unsigned) obituary the well-known facts of his life were related: his Hadrami background, his study tour in the Middle East, his settlement in Batavia as a recognized scholar, where he had distinguished himself,

37 Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje.'

38 The *Qamar al-zaman*, 22 mentioned three months; ʿAlwi ibn Uthman. 'Letter to C. Snouck Hurgronje, 5 February 1914,' mentioned two months (cf. infra).

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by popularizing his science in numerous manuals and booklets, which he printed on his own lithographic press, and the selling of which had been his main source of income.

Among the topical issues he had dealt with were mentioned his attacks on the mystical brotherhoods, his criticism of the Last Admonition of the Prophet, and his approval of Sarekat Islam. Sayyid ʿUthman was praised as a loyal supporter of the government, who had played an important role in controlling the Cilegon uprising, 'for which he was awarded the Nederlandsche Leeuw,.[39] For Snouck Hurgronje and his successors he was a 'valued assistant,' who had always given his opinion straightforwardly. Moreover, the prayer made at the coronation of Wilhelmina – and the subsequent criticism of it in both the Middle Eastern press and in Pan-Islamist circles – was mentioned. According to the *Java-Bode*, the integrity of Sayyid ʿUthman was beyond doubt, even among his adversaries, because he had never employed his influence for his own benefit and had always refused to accept money from his supporters. The indigenous civil servants who were not very religious did not like him and for this reason they slandered him repeatedly. Moreover, the obituary mentioned that in recent times he had lost some of his popularity, because he had taken a rather old fashioned view of modern developments and because of 'his polemical inclinations, which became increasingly vehement as his age advanced.' On a personal note, the *Java-Bode* praised Sayyid ʿUthman as a witty conversationalist and a sensitive aristocrat.

The obituary ended in a report of the funeral 'yesterday afternoon.' It was mentioned that almost the entire Arab community accompanied him to his grave in the cemetery at Karet. From the administration, only the Regent from Batavia was present as Resident Rijfsnijder was ill, while Mr. Cohen was apparently too busy. Other Europeans present included Dr. Hazeu and Dr. Rinkes, as well as some friends of the deceased, Mr. Muller, former Assistant-Resident of Batavia, Doctor Hoogstraaten and Mr. De Nijs Bik.[40] The deceased was extensively praised and his merits, in particular in relation to the Arab community, were pointed out. Furthermore, a plan to establish a school in his memory, bearing his name, was announced.

39 This is evidently incorrect. For the unrest in Cilegon, see Chapter Four.

40 The *Nieuwe Soerabaja-Courant*, 23 January 1914 added the functions of those present, Cohen was acting chairman of the Municipal Council and Assistant-Resident; Hazeu the Director for Education and Worship; Rinkes the Advisor for Native Affairs; De Nijs Bik member of the Municipal Council.

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Other colonial newspapers, and even a newspaper in the Netherlands, dedicated column space to the death of Sayyid ʻUthman.[41] Moreover, in its issue of 8 March, the Surabaya-based weekly *Weekblad voor Indië* published a lengthy obituary under the headline 'Said Oethman.' This article was written by A. Buno Heslinga and was dated February 1914. The article underlined Sayyid ʻUthman's activities in combating religious fanaticism, e.g. from the side of the *tarekat*, and highlighted his loyalty to the government. Apparently, the author of this obituary had been in touch with Sayyid ʻUthman personally, since he remarked that the people loved him as a saint and that '[…] often we witnessed how workers stopped their work and hawkers left their merchandise unattended to kiss respectfully the gown of the old man when he passed by.' According to Buno Heslinga, Sayyid ʻUthman's last wish had been to be buried in an ordinary graveyard, so that his grave would not become a pilgrimage place (*kramat*). Finally, the article mentioned that the funeral was attended by thousands of people and that many people wanted to touch the bier, and that a fight broke out to get hold of the water with which the body was ritually washed.[42]

Uniquely, this obituary included a photograph of Sayyid ʻUthman, which the author claimed to be the only one extant, as Sayyid ʻUthman generally refused to pose for a portrait due to the Islamic prohibition of images, be it that eventually he was pleased with the photograph 'when he saw that his children and grandchildren were so happy with it.' This photograph shows Sayyid ʻUthman proudly wearing the royal decoration on his chest.[43] The date of this photograph is not entirely clear, but information might be gleaned from a letter written by Rinkes to Snouck Hurgronje, dated 6 August 1912. In this letter Rinkes wrote:

> Recently, I had the pleasure of sending you, amongst other things, a print (*afdrukje*) of Sayyid ʻUthman. It was in his *pendopo*, with all the sun blinds (*kree's*) down. The (somewhat obstinate) old gentleman was not able to sit still for long (he was rather ill, but is now recovering), so the

41 For example, *De Locomotief* (22 January 1914) rendering the obituary from the *Java-Bode*, and the *Nieuwe Soerabaja-Courant* (23 January). Also the *Nieuwe Rotterdamsche Courant* of 16 February 1914 published the obituary of 'this faithful servant' from the *Batviaasch Handelsblad*.

42 Buno Heslinga, A. 'Said Othman.' I do not know who Buno Heslinga was. In the *Nieuws van den Dag van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 5 July 1910 it was reported that he had passed the preparatory examination for the Indies administrative service, but I have not found anything on him in the *Regeeringsalmanak* of 1913 and 1914.

43 See Illustration 7 above, p. 150.

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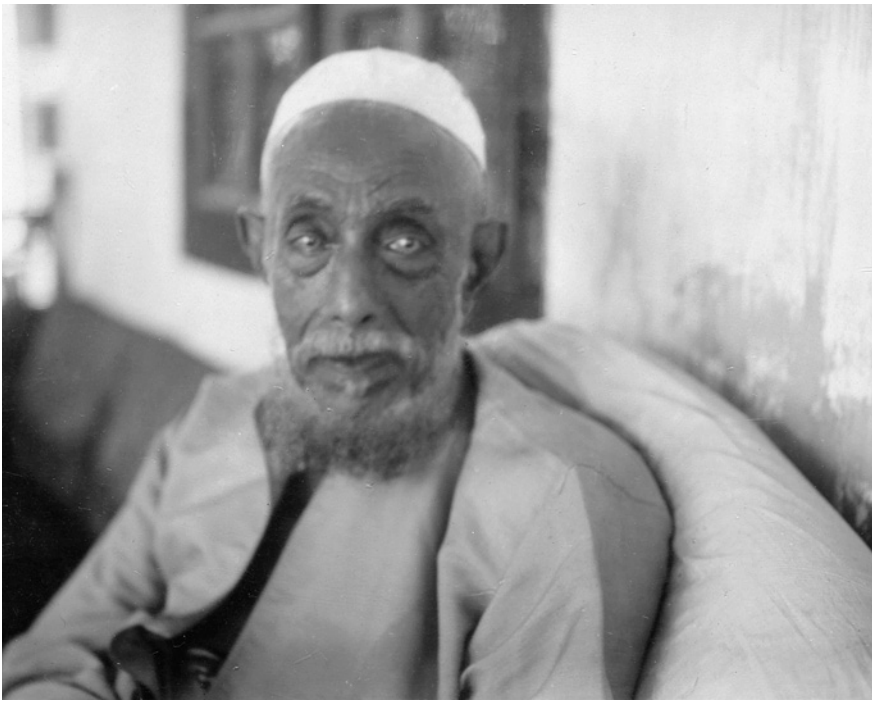

FIGURE 11 *Sayyid ʿUthman, August 1912 (?)*
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> plate was under-exposed. Now I am improving it and I will get a good negative.

Next, Rinkes proposed that Snouck would write a small article on Sayyid Uthman in an illustrated Dutch magazine, while he himself would do the same in a magazine in the Indies.[44] I think this idea was the basis of the present obituary, although Rinkes did not write it himself, but apparently delegated this to Buno Heslinga. The link with Rinkes is clear, however, as Rinkes was on the editorial board of the *Weekblad voor Indië* and because the obituary is so well informed and includes personal details. If this letter indeed refers to the photograph of Sayyid ʿUthman wearing his decoration, it would date from August 1912. Unfortunately, this photograph is not part of the Snouck legacy at Leiden University; however, there is another photograph that was almost certainly

44 Rinkes, 'Letters to Snouck Hurgronje,' 6 August 1912.

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taken on the same occasion. This photograph shows a less formally dressed Sayyid ʿUthman without the decoration and without his turban.[45]

As might be expected, attention was drawn, not only in the Dutch colonial media, but also in the indigenous press, to the death of Sayyid ʿUthman. As an example, I mention here the Surabaya-based *Oetoesan Hindia*, which reported in its issue of Thursday, 22 January 1914 that Sayyid ʿUthman had died. It was remarked that he was praised for his integrity and loyalty to the government, but disliked by many because he had requested God's blessing for Queen Wilhelmina. His bad reputation in Egyptian and Syrian periodicals was also noted.[46] Another noteworthy example was published in the Padang-based journal *al-Munir*, the same periodical, which reported on Sayyid ʿUthman's involvement in Sarekat Islam congress in Solo. In the issue of 27 January 1914, an obituary appeared that was signed by four sons of the deceased, Sayyid ʿAlwi, Sayyid Yahya, Sayyid Hasan and Sayyid ʿAbd Allah,[47] and which reported the death in the evening of 18 January 1914 at approximately 6.30 pm of their father, 'the Upholder of Religion and the *Mufti* of the Netherlands East Indies' (*paku agama dan Mufti Islam di Hindia Nederland*). In addition to the information that Sayyid ʿUthman was appointed in 1891 as Honorary Advisor for Arab Affairs by the government and that he had received a royal decoration, it was reported that immediately after he had died, people started to gather at his house and that already at four o'clock in the morning hundreds of people had arrived there to mourn. Around one o'clock the following day the funeral procession left his house for the Arab cemetery in Petamburan. The convoy consisted of 10,000 people and many police (*polisi*), both European and indigenous, accompanied the procession. Among those attending were both European and indigenous dignitaries, and the presence of Dr. Hazeu and of Dr. Rinkes was explicitly mentioned. According to this obituary, the funeral service was held in the mosque of Tanah Abang, which could accommodate 2,000 people for the Friday prayer. Because of the enormous amount of mourners, the prayer

45 Leiden University Library, Or. 12.288 J 17. This photograph is kept independently from the letters, so the provenance is not clear. I have also seen it hanging on the wall in the house of Habib Ahyad Banahsan from Pondok Bambu, Duren Sawit, Jakarta Timur when I visited him on 17 December 2011. Also Laffan, *Islamic nationhood*, 86 reproduces it. When I visited M.A. Alaydrus in his house in Jakarta in 2006, there was another unknown picture (of a much younger Sayid ʿUthman) hanging on the wall. Sayyid ʿUthman, 'Letters to C. Snouck Hurgronje,' wrote on 4 October 1913 that the Resident of Batavia, along with some other people, had visited him at his house and had asked to take a photograph. This photo is not known.

46 I thank Mohamed Hisyam for this reference.

47 The other two sons who did not sign were ʿAqil and Hamid.

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had to be done twice and both times the mosque was completely packed. The prayers were led by Sayyid ʿAli al-Habshi,[48] the second time with the help of two preachers (*muballigh*). After having reached the grave, the *talqin*[49] was read for the deceased and Sayyid ʿAli uttered a funeral oration in Arabic and in Malay. After the utterance of the *tahlil* and a supplication (*duʿa*) for the deceased, Sayyid Muhammad ibn ʿAbd al-Rahman ibn Shahab gave an even longer funeral oration, both in Arabic and in Malay.[50] Finally, this obituary reported that the *tahlil* and the *duʿa* were also read for the deceased in mosques and prayer houses in Batavia and other places.[51]

From these various reports and obituaries it appears that the death of Sayyid ʿUthman was reported in both European colonial and indigenous media. The contents of these various report underline the high esteem in which Sayyid ʿUthman was held, not only in Batavia but also in other parts of Java and even in the Netherlands East Indies at large, and not only in government circles but also among the indigenous population.

The death of Sayyid ʿUthman was also communicated to Snouck Hurgronje in the Netherlands in a letter in Arabic, dated 5 February 1914, written by the oldest son of the deceased, ʿAlwi. The envelope was addressed to Prof. Dr. C. Snouck Hurgronje, but the letter itself addressed Snouck as 'Our brother in God, 'Abd al-Ghaffar.' ʿAlwi communicated that his father had died on the night of Monday, 21 Safar 1332, corresponding to 19 January 1914,[52] after an illness of two months, during which Sayyid ʿUthman had been confined to bed. Eventually, he died as a result of obstruction of the urine, followed by constipation of the abdomen. The funeral took place at the Tanah Abang cemetery according to the will of the deceased. According to ʿAlwi, more than 10,000 people had attended. In addition, the family had received many condolences by telegraph from remote places. Moreover, ʿAlwi mentioned that Sayyid ʿUthman left behind six sons and seven daughters, and that he himself was functioning as ex-

48 See Alatas, 'Becoming Indonesians,' 54. As a nonagenarian ʿAli al-Habshi also lead the funeral service of Hosein Djajadiningrat, see Pijper, 'Djajadiningrat,' 408. Today al-Habshi's grave in Kwitang, Jakarta is a place of worship.

49 This is the utterance of the Profession of Faith, which is said for the deceased to prepare him for his meeting with the Angels of Death who come to examine his faith in the grave, Juynboll, *Handleiding*, 163.

50 Sayyid Muhammad Shahab (d. 1930) was a respected member of the Arab community and a reputed speaker on public occasions, Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 109–111.

51 *al-Munir* Vol. 3, nr. 23 (27 January 1914): 366–67.

52 This was actually Sunday, 18 January. The difference is because, according to the Islamic calendar, the new day starts at sunset, while according to the Gregorian calendar, the new day starts at midnight.

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ecutor of the possessions of the deceased, which consisted of dwelling-houses, the printing establishment and the books. At the end of the letter, ʿAlwi offered Snouck his help if the latter needed anything.[53]

As mentioned in this letter, Sayyid ʿUthman left behind six sons and seven daughters. In 1984, ʿAbd al-Qadir ibn ʿUthman Banahsan, a grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman through Sayyid ʿUthman's daughter Sharifa Khadija, made a genealogical chart of the descendants of Sayyid ʿUthman.[54] After mentioning that Sayyid ʿUthman left behind four wives: Kumai, Ratu Kasmiri, Sharifa ʿAlwiyya and Gembira,[55] the chart mentions his children (without indicating who their mother was). It lists six sons: the oldest ʿAlwi, ʿAqil, Yahya, ʿAbd Allah, Hasan and the youngest Hamid, and seven daughters: the oldest Fatima, Ruqaya, Sidah, Khadija, ʿAlwiyyah, Nur and Ummuhani, the youngest. In addition to this, the document also lists the names of all the children of these children of Sayyid ʿUthman, in sum, 79 grandchildren.[56] It is noteworthy that the document does not mention all children that originated from Sayyid ʿUthman. As we have seen in Chapter Two, he had fathered at least one son, called Muhammad and probably more children, in Hadramaut. Perhaps, these children are not listed because there was no contact between them and the Batavia branch of the family.[57]

The grave in Karet in Tanah Abang where Sayyid ʿUthman was buried no longer exists, because the entire cemetery in Tanah Abang had to make way for urban expansion in Jakarta in the 1970s, under the governorship of Ali Sadikin.[58] When the grave was located in Tanah Abang, it was taken care of by Habib ʿUmar, a grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman who was born from the marriage of Sayyid ʿUthman's daughter Khadija with Habib ʿUthman ibn Muhammad Banahsan. When the cemetery in Karet was evacuated, the grave of Sayyid ʿUthman was first moved to Jeruk Perut. From there, Habib ʿUmar, together with another grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman, Habib ʿUthman ibn ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman, moved the grave again, this time to Pondok Bambu, Duren Sawit in

53 ʿAlwi ibn Uthman, 'Letter to C. Snouck Hurgronje.' The envelope mentions that on 1 March 1914 the letter was forwarded from Leiden to Prof. Richard Gottheil at Columbia University, where Snouck was staying at that time. On the same envelope, a note in Snouck's handwriting indicates that he had answered the letter on 16 March 1913. This answer has been lost.

54 I thank Habib Ahyad Banahsan, who gave me a photocopy of this table in December 2011.

55 Apart from these names nothing is known to me about these wives.

56 ʿAbd al-Qadir Banahsan, *Genealogical chart.*

57 Muhammad ibn ʿAlwi ibn Yahya, *Kitab sharaf al-mahya*, 11, mentions seven sons, the seventh called Muhammad, and no daughters at all.

58 Shihab, 'Mufti Betawi dari Pekojan.' Shahabuddin, *Otobiografi*, 56.

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FIGURE 12 *Grave of Sayyid ʿUthman in Pondok Bambu, Jakarta*
PHOTOGRAPH BY THE AUTHOR, DECEMBER 2011

Jakarta Timur, where Habib ʿUmar lived. Here Habib ʿUmar also established a mosque, called the Masjid al-ʿAbidin.[59]

Currently, the resting place of Sayyid ʿUthman is the central grave of a small complex, where not only Sayyid ʿUthman, but also his daughters Khadija (d. 1974)[60] and Ummuhani (d. 1996)[61] are buried. Moreover, members of the Banahsan family, like Habib ʿUmar (d. 1982), my former informant Sayyid

59 Interview with Habib Ahyad Banahsan, Jakarta, 17 December 2011.

60 At the time of her death she was 103 years of age, interview with her grandson M.A. Alaydrus, Jakarta 20 November 2006.

61 This date of her death is remarkable, because she outlived her father by 82 years.

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M.A. Alaydrus and other members of related *sayyid* families are interred here. The complex is managed by a great-great grandson of Sayyid ʿUthman, Habib Ahyad Banahsan, who descends from Sayyid ʿUthman through his daughter Khadija. He is a grandson of Habib ʿUmar, the person who transferred Sayyid ʿUthman's grave to Pondok Bambu. Today, from time to time, religious gatherings take place at the Masjid al-ʿAbidin, next to the grave complex.

## 6 Conclusion

This chapter has dealt with the year 1913, the final year of Sayyid ʿUthman's life, and we have seen that despite his advanced age this was not really a quiet year for him. Indeed, this year saw the rise of Sarekat Islam. Sayyid ʿUthman supported Sarekat Islam wholeheartedly and expressed this support in writing. He believed that Sarekat Islam stimulated its members to better adhere to the prescriptions of Islam and that this organization worked to advance the progress of the population: it stimulated economic activities among the people and promoted security.

Moreover, in the final year of his life Sayyid ʿUthman wrote a number of small pamphlets warning Arabs to adhere to the principle of *kafaʾa* and a small admonition to stick to religion in general.

Sayyid ʿUthman died on 18 January 1914 and the next day he was buried in Tanah Abang amid great official and public interest. Due to the construction of a motorway in the 1970s, the grave was moved and is currently located in Pondok Bambu in East Jakarta.

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# PART 3

## *Sayyid ʿUthman: A View from Without*

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CHAPTER 9

# Conclusion

## 1 Introduction

The present chapter corresponds to Part Three of this book and forms the conclusion to this work. In Part One of this book I presented a 'view from within' on the life of Sayyid 'Uthman by translating and studying the indigenous biography the *Qamar al-zaman*; in Part Two I gave my own account of his life and work. In this final part I will look back on his life 'from without.' I return to the research questions that were raised in the introduction and provide an analytical evaluation of the main aspects of his life. I will start by looking back on the *Qamar al-zaman.*

## 2 The *Qamar al-zaman* Revisited

When we compare the narrative of Sayyid 'Uthman's life presented in the *Qamar al-zaman* in Part One with the biography that I presented in Part Two, we see many resemblances. Both in the *Qamar al-zaman*, which was written shortly after the death of Sayyid 'Uthman by a grandson and which presents a 'view from within,' as well as in my own version of his life, which presents a 'view from without,' Sayyid 'Uthman appeared as a puritan, well-known, well-connected and productive Muslim scholar who worked tirelessly in the interests of the Muslim community to propagate a stricter following of the principles of the Shari'a.

However, the *Qamar al-zaman* frequently remained silent on issues that, according to my own research, appear to be of great importance. The first case relates to the protracted controversy (lasting almost four years) with the Mecca-based scholar of Minangkabau descent, Ahmad Khatib, on the new Friday mosque in Palembang. What was actually at stake here was the question of which of the two men was the most authoritative Muslim scholar in the Netherlands East Indies. Because the outcome of this battle did not exactly favour the protagonist, it was left out of the *Qamar al-zaman*, which wanted to present Sayyid 'Uthman as the greatest scholar of the archipelago and his life as a success story.

Another and more important issue that the *Qamar al-zaman* fails to deal with adequately is Sayyid 'Uthman's involvement in the colonial administra-

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tion and his partnership with C. Snouck Hurgronje, whose name is absent altogether. Notably, all criticism of Sayyid ʿUthman that was inspired by anti-colonial and Pan-Islamist thought was omitted. This indigenous biography does mention that the government appreciated Sayyid ʿUthman and that he was rewarded with a royal decoration, but the real reason for awarding him this honour and the precise nature of his relationship with the government were not discussed. Indeed, the *Qamar al-zaman* is quite dismissive of this subject, mentioning only that 'this matter will not be dealt with at length, for people already know of it' (stanza 181). The obtaining of the royal decoration was clearly seen as a reason for pride, but the fact that Sayyid ʿUthman was actually in the service of the colonial administration and also received a monthly allowance for this, was obviously a sensitive matter. Consequently, the nature of Sayyid ʿUthman's involvement in the colonial government was not mentioned explicitly in the *Qamar al-zaman*. Evidently, the text did not want to diminish the greatness of its protagonist by indicating that the authority of the Sayyid ʿUthman was not based solely on his scholarship, but was also strengthened by his government position, and that the government made use of him in carrying out its Islam policies. The description of Sayyid ʿUthman's funeral also conspires to conceal the important place of the government in his life. The text mentions that the police and civil servants were present (stanza 192), but does not mention prominent representatives of the colonial administration who were also in attendance.

In conclusion, we can say that, in comparison to my own account of the life of Sayyid ʿUthman, the *Qamar al-zaman* preferred to situate Sayyid ʿUthman's activities in an almost entirely Islamic sphere and to minimize the colonial context, despite this being central to his career.

## 3 Sayyid ʿUthman's Attitude towards the Colonial Government and Western Culture

It has often been assumed that Sayyid ʿUthman's close relationship with the Dutch colonial government was due to a longing for personal gain. Consequently, he was often characterized as a traitor and a spy who was betraying his coreligionists. Opinions like this are in line with views on Sayyid ʿUthman voiced in Pan-Islamist oriented circles in his own environment and in the press in the Middle East during his lifetime.

This book has shown that Sayyid ʿUthman fully approved of Dutch rule in the Netherlands East Indies throughout his career, both before and after he was on the pay-roll of the colonial administration from 1889 onwards. The first

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glimpse of this attitude was in his ethico-religious manual from the end of 1880, *al-Tuffaha al-wardiyya*, in which Sayyid ʿUthman prohibited Muslims from appropriating the belongings of Christians and other non-Muslims through deceit. He mentioned two major principles to explain this stance: firstly, he regarded the Dutch as bringers of safety; and secondly, for this reason they belonged to the People of the Covenant and therefore fell under the protection of Muslims. These two principles recurred regularly in his writings.

The first principle implied that the Dutch colonizer, as the bringer of safety, possessed the real power. Here, we see a central idea in Islamic state philosophy at work; namely, that any form of legitimate government was better than anarchy (*fitna*), even if this government is evil or infidel. Of importance, here, is the avoidance of *fitna*. In early Islamic history this term referred to periods of disturbances and civil war caused by deviant sects or schools that broke away from mainstream Islam and thereby endangered the purity of the faith. In later usage, this term was used for any revolt or disturbance, but the theological undertones expressing the fear that political chaos would affect the faith remained strong. This was the reason that believers were obliged to obey the established sovereign, as long as his orders did not contradict Islam.[1] In real terms, this meant that Sayyid ʿUthman thought that Muslims should obey the state laws of the colonial ruler.

Sayyid ʿUthman further justified his acceptance of colonial rule with a more technical, juridical argument; namely, that the Dutch were similar to the people who had a covenant (*ʿahd*) with the Muslims. This concept is also a basic principle in Islamic state philosophy and used to regulate the coexistence of Muslims and non-Muslims. The term covenant (*ʿahd*) can have various meanings and mostly refers to Christian minorities under dominant Muslim rule, who, due to their covenant with the Muslims, have a protected status and are able to practice their religion in freedom, albeit that they must pay particular taxes for the privilege of doing so. In this case, however, the term refers to a treaty between Muslims and non-Muslims outside the Islamic territory.[2] According to Sayyid ʿUthman, in colonial society the relationship between Muslims and non-Muslims was governed by such a covenant and so the Muslim population should treat the Europeans with respect and acknowledge their legal rights. In voicing this point of view, Sayyid ʿUthman was in line with his teachers ʿAbd Allah ibn ʿUmar and Ahmad Dahlan.

Departing from this basic attitude in later publications, written prior to entering the service of the government, Sayyid ʿUthman went a step further and

1 E.I. (2), ii, 930–931, s.v. *fitna.*

2 Cf. E.I. (2), i, 254–255 s.v. *ʿahd* and E.I. (2), ii, 227–231, s.v. *dhimma.*

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started inviting believers not only to accept colonial rule, but also to be thankful for this, because this rule brought well-being to the Muslim population and did not interfere in religious affairs. The first incidence of this can be found in his *Adab al-insan* from 1885. Sayyid ʿUthman would repeat these thoughts on other occasions, such as in his notorious prayer for Queen Wilhelmina on the occasion of her acceptance of the throne in 1898 and in his writings on Sarekat Islam in 1913. In these two cases, Sayyid ʿUthman also explicitly mentioned the Dutch financial support for particular Muslim affairs, i.e. paying the salaries for Muslim judges (*penghulus*) and granting subsidies for mosques.

An new element emerged in the debates that arose after Sayyid ʿUthman had given the prayer made for Queen Wilhelmina in 1898. In these debates he was forced to defend his position explicitly. In addition to the already mentioned arguments, he justified his personal attitude towards the government with the concept of *mudara*, 'amicable behaviour,' as distinct from 'flattery' (*mudahana*). The concept of *mudara* was of a strategic nature and was permitted according to the Law, while some scholars even required it when it formed a necessary condition for freely practicing religious life.

In addition to these general and technical arguments from the Islamic tradition for accepting the Dutch government, motives of a biographical nature may also have played a role in the case of Sayyid ʿUthman. As mentioned, as a child, Sayyid ʿUthman witnessed how his grandfather ʿAbd al-Rahman al-Misri who had raised him, had been in touch with the Dutch authorities. Consequently, he would have considered close cooperation with the colonizer normal. Moreover, we have seen that Sayyid ʿUthman spent many of his formative years in the Arabian Peninsula. Both the time he spent in Mecca (1841–1847) as well as his residence in Hadramaut (1847–1862) were very unstable from a political point of view and often unsafe. Although we do not know how Sayyid ʿUthman perceived this, he will certainly have been unhappy with this situation and we may expect that upon his return to the Netherlands East Indies this experience of virtual anarchy may have contributed to his appreciation of Dutch colonial rule. Although the Dutch conducted discriminatory policies towards the Arabs, in comparison with the regions in the Middle East where Sayyid ʿUthman had lived, Dutch rule was more stable, less arbitrary and provided much more safety to its in habitants.

All in all, I would suggest that due to his personal experiences as a young boy in Batavia as well as during his residence in the Middle East, Sayyid ʿUthman was favourably disposed to the colonial administration. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman had good arguments from Islamic tradition to legitimize Dutch rule in the Netherlands East Indies without violating Islamic doctrines. He voiced these ideas long before he entered the service of the government and I do not

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think that his involvement in the administration changed his views or, as has been suggested, was the underlying reason for promoting a positive attitude towards the colonial ruler among the native population.

In line with his approval of Dutch rule, from time to time Sayyid ʿUthman also expressed his appreciation for diverse items of modern Western culture, which he linked to the arrival of the colonizer in the archipelago. In this book, we have seen that Sayyid ʿUthman accepted and appreciated particular modern Western items: steamships, steam trains, the telegraph, astral lamps, drilled wells, streetlights, irrigation works and printing. Moreover, in his *Cempaka mulia* from 1886 he mentioned that the benefits of Western civilization included good exercise books on agriculture, trade and similar topics. On the other hand, it is clear that he had reservations about photography, the use of the phonograph and the use of the telescope, the latter two at least in a religious context. We also know that he was greatly affected by a fatal car accident in Batavia in 1909, but we do not know more about his view of the motorcar.[3] As a matter of course, Sayyid ʿUthman also disapproved of particular features of Western culture, like Western dress, but this had to do with his conviction that Arabs should stick to their own dress code in order to distinguish themselves as the most respectable ethnic group of mankind.

In conclusion, we can say that Sayyid ʿUthman judged technological achievements of modern Western culture, as well as other features of Western modernity, primarily according to Islamic standards, and only permitted believers to use these matters when they fitted into his Islamic worldview. If anything did not fit in with this, like Western education, he rejected it.

## 4 Sayyid ʿUthman's Involvement in the Colonial Administration

An important question is how Sayyid ʿUthman viewed his own position in the administration. We have seen in Chapter Four that in his letter from 1888 to C. Snouck Hurgronje he asked for a position that he describes as advisor or, in Arabic, as *mufti*. Sayyid ʿUthman will undoubtedly have become acquainted with the term advisor through his contacts with Karel Frederik Holle, who held this title himself as of 1871. Also, Sayyid ʿUthman had seen in the Middle East how various *muftis* functioned in society, for example, his teacher Ahmad Dahlan in Mecca. In Sayyid ʿUthman's view, a *mufti* was a Muslim scholar who guided the Muslim population with his knowledge and moral example. A *mufti* also advised the government in Islamic affairs and, with the help of the government, could enforce Islamic regulations upon the people. So, the position

3 Kaptein, 'The lament.'

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he was aiming at was no less than the office of State *mufti* of the Netherlands East Indies.

When Sayyid ʿUthman was granted an official position within the administration in 1891, the title he received was that of Honorary Advisor for *Arab* Affairs and this title was deliberately chosen to avoid the impression among the population that Sayyid ʿUthman was appointed to deal with *Muslim* affairs. This would not have been in line with the government policy of religious neutrality and avoiding interference in religious matters. Consequently, Sayyid ʿUthman received his monthly allowance behind closed doors. Sayyid ʿUthman himself took an ambivalent position on the issue of the religious neutrality of the state. As we have seen, on the one hand, he was praising the government for not interfering in Muslim affairs; on the other hand, he also wanted the government to play a very active role in religious life. To illustrate this latter point I mention two examples here. Firstly, he was very happy that the government contributed financially to the religious infrastructure of the Muslim population in the form of salaries for religious functionaries and subsidies for mosques. Indeed, he was keen to expand this, as his plea for government subsidies for cemeteries demonstrated. Secondly, he was also of the opinion that the government should enforce particular regulations. An example of this was his call on the government to forbid the playing of the lute and to obstruct a mass gathering for the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, because this particular event was only meant to elicit money from the people.[4] Of course, Sayyid ʿUthman's interpretation of his position of Advisor as State *mufti*, was not shared by the administration, but occasionally some of his religious publications were facilitated by government subsidies, albeit secretly. Although Sayyid ʿUthman undoubtedly would have liked to play a more public role within the government, it is clear that he was very proud of the position he held within the administration until the end of his life and that he thought that this position added to his own effectiveness as a religious leader.

His first superior within the administration from 1889–1906, Snouck Hurgronje, primarily saw Sayyid ʿUthman as an informant on Muslim affairs in the Netherlands East Indies and as an intermediary between the government and the Muslim population. Through Sayyid ʿUthman's extensive network, the government got access to all kinds of knowledge that was relevant to Islamic policies. Secondly, through the strong religious and scholarly prestige of Sayyid ʿUthman among the Muslims in the Indies, the government had an instrument to actively interfere in Muslim affairs if necessary. In performing this second function, Sayyid ʿUthman did not need to go against his own religious

4 *Nieuws van den Dag van Nederlandsch-Indië*, 8 April 1908.

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convictions, since many issues that the Dutch government was trying to contain, like the *wasiat* and the *tarekat*, were also severely condemned by Sayyid ʿUthman and, on the whole, Sayyid ʿUthman's views were in line with those of the government. As we have seen, Sayyid ʿUthman and Snouck cooperated closely and the cooperation seemed to have worked well, with Snouck mainly taking care of the contacts within the colonial apparatus and Sayyid ʿUthman those within the Muslim community. Snouck, however, always had the final responsibility.

A fascinating question related to the cooperation between Sayyid ʿUthman and Snouck Hurgronje is how Sayyid ʿUthman perceived his superior. Firstly, there was a considerable age difference: Sayyid ʿUthman was in his late sixties when he met Snouck, who was in his early thirties and we might wonder how this worked out. However, I can find no information to suggest that this age difference obstructed their working relationship. A more fascinating question is how Sayyid ʿUthman perceived Snouck from a religious point of view. As mentioned in Chapter Four, when writing to Snouck in Leiden before they had met, Sayyid ʿUthman addressed him with his European name. After they had made each other's acquaintance in Batavia he addressed him by his Muslim name, ʿAbd al-Ghaffar, which Snouck had assumed while he was in Arabia in 1885. It is evident that after he met with Snouck, Sayyid ʿUthman started to regard the latter as a fellow Muslim. However, it is not clear to me how this worked: for instance, did they ever pray together? Did they ever fast together? What will have contributed to Snouck's Muslim credentials is that both men conversed in Arabic and that Sayyid ʿUthman will undoubtedly have been impressed with Snouck's Meccan connections and his huge expertise in things Islamic. On the whole, it appears that their working relationship was a good one, with the exception of a temporary breach related to Sayyid ʿUthman's writing of the prayer for Queen Wilhelmina in 1898, which he did against the will of Snouck. Moreover, Snouck had opposed the idea of granting Sayyid ʿUthman a royal decoration out of fear for over exposure of Sayyid ʿUthman as an associate of the government, which would diminish his prestige among the Muslim population. When Sayyid ʿUthman eventually received a royal decoration in 1899, relations between the two men were healed, when Snouck congratulated Sayyid ʿUthman, despite Snouck's opposition to this award.

It is difficult to gain an insight into how Sayyid ʿUthman and Snouck discussed things and how they exchanged arguments on particular issues. However, we can perhaps learn something about this from the two letters that Sayyid ʿUthman wrote to Snouck in 1909. These letters deal with the issue of Qur'an translation, which was discussed in Chapter Seven. We have seen that in the booklet *Hukm al-Rahman*, Sayyid ʿUthman took a rather rigid point of

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view by completely rejecting the translation of the Qur'an. After Snouck had responded that there existed many translations of the Qur'an and that no one rejected these, we see a change in the position of Sayyid 'Uthman who wrote in a different way about the issue of the interpretation (*tafsir*) of the Qur'an translation. In his reply to Snouck he took a much less rigid view on the issue than in his *Hukm al-Rahman*, and instead of mentioning the concept of *tafsir* reluctantly, in this letter he seemed to allow it generously as a means to circumvent the difficulties surrounding the proper translation of the Qur'an. This raises an interesting question about the relationship between the two men. Had Snouck actually mitigated the views of the *mufti* of Batavia here? And was Sayyid 'Uthman prepared to give up his more rigid ideas after having learned Snouck's more liberal opinion on this? In any case, this example of the translation of the Qur'an shows that, at least in his letters to Snouck, Sayyid 'Uthman was ready to accept Snouck's more liberal opinion on a sensitive religious issue. Unfortunately, I do not know of similar examples, but this one is telling. On the other hand, it is clear that Sayyid 'Uthman did not automatically follow Snouck, as became clear in his views on dress, which went against the views of his superior in the Office for Native Affairs.

After Snouck Hurgronje had left the Indies in 1906, he was replaced in his capacity as Advisor for Native Affairs by G.A.J. Hazeu, who thus became the new superior of Sayyid 'Uthman. On the whole, it seems that Sayyid 'Uthman's cooperation with Hazeu was much less intensive than with Snouck. Perhaps this had to do with the fact that Hazeu was a Javanist, was not a Muslim and lacked the same superior expertise in Islam and Arabic that Snouck had. It might, however, also have to do with Hazeu's perception of Sayyid 'Uthman, which became clear in his dealings with the 1908 affair of the translation of the Qur'an in Solo. As we have seen, in relation to this issue, Hazeu feared Sayyid 'Uthman's idiosyncratic behaviour and he started to see him as a security risk. Later, in March 1913, Sayyid 'Uthman and Hazeu and another official from the Office of Native Affairs, D.A. Rinkes, cooperated closely again, but in this case the initiative to involve Sayyid 'Uthman appears to have been initiated by the leadership of Sarekat Islam and not from the Office of Native Affairs.

On the whole, Sayyid 'Uthman seems to have been a useful and effective servant to the colonial administration. As a scholar, and particularly as a scholar of Arab descent, Sayyid 'Uthman had great moral authority among the native population and this was precisely the reason why he was attractive for the government, which feared religiously inspired uprisings and aimed to contain the Muslim population. As we have seen, despite its official neutrality in religious matters, in particular cases the government interfered actively in this

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domain, for instance by secretly subsidizing Sayyid ʿUthman's publications to influence the Muslim population.

Sayyid ʿUthman's authority was seriously challenged a number of times during his career. The first challenge originated around 1895 from Arabs who were influenced by anti-colonial Pan-Islamist thought. After the arrival in Batavia of a militant Ottoman consul and the affair related to the prayer he had made for Queen Wilhelmina in 1898, Sayyid ʿUthman's authority was challenged further. This criticism depicted Sayyid ʿUthman as a collaborator of the wicked Dutch colonial administration and seemed to have resulted in a decline in his authority among these Arabs. As a result, Snouck Hurgronje became worried, because a decline in the authority of Sayyid ʿUthman implied a decrease in the effectiveness of Sayyid ʿUthman to influence these Arabs in line with government policies. This group with their Pan-Islamist sympathies was precisely the faction of the Muslim population that the Dutch feared and wanted to control.

What precisely the consequences of this and other challenges were for the authority of Sayyid ʿUthman is difficult to assess.[5] In an earlier publication I indicated that he had lost so much authority due to the Wilhelmina affair that he was no longer able to play a leading role.[6] However, this conclusion was premature. We now know that towards the end of his life, during the rise of Sarekat Islam, Sayyid ʿUthman was active as both a government advisor and as a religious leader and we have seen that his ideas on Sarekat Islam played a role in framing public opinion about this organization. All this seems to suggest that the authority of Sayyid ʿUthman, at least among the native Muslim population, remained largely intact despite a number of severe challenges.

## 5 Sayyid ʿUthman as a Scholar

An important element in the scholarship of Sayyid ʿUthman was his position as a *sayyid*. This noble descent entailed a number of issues that are crucial to properly understanding his career. Being a *sayyid* made him feel obliged to continue the tradition of teaching and leading an exemplary Islamic life, as initiated by the Prophet himself. At the same time, his genealogy afforded him a natural prestige among a large part of the native Muslim population in the archipelago.

5 Other major challenges were of a more intellectual nature and will be dealt with in the next section.

6 Kaptein, 'The Sayyid and the Queen,' 174.

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The writings of Sayyid ʿUthman, as Snouck Hurgronje remarked, did not contain anything new, but are important as a reflection of Muslim life in the Netherlands East Indies of his day.[7] His works, moreover, form a fine example of the particular type of religiosity in Hadramaut at this time, with its emphasis on personal piety, morality in daily life, puritanism and missionary activism. As we have seen, his works were numerous and dealt with virtually all branches of traditional Muslim learning. Many of his works were written to address particular situations that arose in Muslim life in the Dutch East Indies, and they did so from a normative Islamic perspective, as had been laid down in the classical Shafiʿi manuals of *fiqh*, like those of the sixteenth century *ʿulama'* Ibn Hajar and al-Ramli. As such, they did not contribute anything new from an intellectual point of view, but they do show what issues were important and, moreover, they contributed to the further Islamization of society in the sense that Islamic notions became more widespread. Furthermore, it should be noted that this lack of originality was completely in line with the dominant form of scholarship at the time, which basically aimed at preserving the canonical tradition from the past, applying it to the present and transmitting it respectfully to future generations.

As a scholar, Sayyid ʿUthman could boast of a wide international scholarly network and a fine intellectual pedigree, but throughout his career there were moments when his learning was contested. This occurred, for instance, in Batavia, when Sayyid ʿUthman was challenged by a local scholar on the correct date for starting the fast, but he overcame this confrontation gloriously. Moreover, Sayyid ʿUthman had been engaged in scholarly polemics, in which his position as the most authoritative scholar of the Netherlands East Indies was at stake. The first time this occurred was in the aforementioned polemics with Ahmad Khatib on the new Friday mosque in Palembang. This debate was also closely watched by Snouck Hurgronje, for had Sayyid ʿUthman lost this battle for prestige, his usefulness for the government as an intermediary between the administration and the Muslim masses would have been in question. Eventually, the debate ended unresolved and, in 1908, the two men expressed their appreciation for each other. Another polemic initiated by Sayyid ʿUthman was with the *penghulu* of Bandung, Haji Hasan Mustafa, who was also held in high esteem by Snouck Hurgronje. Following Sayyid ʿUthman's severe attack on Haji Hasan, the latter declared that he did not want a polemic and, consequently, Sayyid ʿUthman appeared victorious in their confrontation.

In both cases, Sayyid ʿUthman's position as the greatest scholar of the Netherlands East Indies remained undamaged, but this was not true in the case of

7 Snouck Hurgronje, 'Sajjid Oethman's gids,' 285.

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another debate in which Sayyid ʿUthman became involved during his eighties. These polemics dealt with the new Islamic thought that had been developed and spread by the Cairene reformists and which had entered Southeast Asia at the beginning of the twentieth century. These reformists wanted to return to the original sources of Islam, the Qur'an and the Hadith, and to reject past authorities from the canonical tradition. Although Sayyid ʿUthman had pretensions to play a role in this huge international debate about the epistemological foundations of Islam, his contributions were very traditional, in the sense that they were just a repetition of earlier opinions by great authorities of the past and of kindred spirits from his own time, like the internationally renowned champion of traditionalist Islam Yusuf al-Nabhani. As such, Sayyid ʿUthman's contribution were respectable and, judged according to the criteria of the period, completely in line with conventional notions of proper learning. However, they did not recognize the revolutionary character of the Cairene reformists. When, nine years after the death of Sayyid ʿUthman, Rashid Rida was asked for a clarification of a few passages in Sayyid ʿUthman's legal manual *Kitab al-qawanin al-sharʿiyya*, he replied that these passages 'show an ignorance in legal matters and a mastery of Arabic that does not enable one to understand the Law without perfecting the language first, just like all the other writings that we have read from him.'[8] This confirmed Rida's earlier devastating reviews of Sayyid ʿUthman's writings.

An intriguing question is whether the scholarly opinions of Sayyid ʿUthman were ever affected by his government position. In answering this question, it is appropriate to examine two issues; namely, the appointment of a Muslim judge (*qadi*), and the validity of written evidence. Concerning the appointment of the *qadi*, in his 1881 Manual for the Islamic Courts, Sayyid ʿUthman stated that this functionary should be appointed by the ruler; this could be an Islamic ruler, or his replacement, or the religious and administrative establishment in a territory (*ahl al-hall wa-l-ʿaqd*). In this publication from 1881 he did not mention explicitly that particular authoritative Muslim scholars had also stated that this task could also be fulfilled by a non-Muslim ruler. Interestingly, in later publications, after he had entered the service of the administration, Sayyid ʿUthman also dealt with the issue of the appointment of judges and in these later publications he mentioned explicitly that an appointment by a non-Muslim ruler was also valid. This does not mean that Sayyid ʿUthman changed or adapted his views under the influence of his official position, but rather that in formulating his views he tried to facilitate the government's prac-

8 *al-Manar* 24:3 (13 March 1923): 179–182. The request came from Muhammad Basyuni Imran from Sambas.

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tice as well as he could within the boundaries of Islamic law. The second issue, the validity of written evidence, was also dealt with in his 1881 manual. Here Sayyid ʿUthman stated that written evidence was not considered valid by itself and that trustworthy witnesses must confirm that its content was authentic. Similarly, in later publications Sayyid ʿUthman allowed a much more flexible use of the pertinent rules and I think this also shows that he was ready to stretch Islamic law as far as possible to facilitate the encroaching Dutch colonial bureaucracy in its aspiration to document legal actions. These examples show that his official position might have stimulated him to express his ideas as much as possible in line with government interests, but in doing this, he never went against his reading of the rules of the Shariʿa.

Moreover, we have seen that, in some cases, Sayyid ʿUthman produced particular writings almost on demand. An interesting case in point is his booklet *Cempaka mulia* from 1886. As we saw in Chapter Four, this demonstrated explicit praise for the colonial government and the benefits that it brought and, as we have seen, it was almost certainly written under the influence of Karel Frederik Holle. Remarkably, among the benefits of modern Western culture, he mentioned text books on agriculture, trade and similar topics, while in his later polemics with the reformist inspired Muslims in Palembang, Sayyid ʿUthman strongly disapproved of modern Western education, which included secular topics. Perhaps this positive view of Western education in his 1886 booklet reflects the contacts that Sayyid ʿUthman had with a friend of Holle, J.A. van der Chijs, who had been an inspector for indigenous education. In any case, it underlines that the booklet was clearly of a strategic nature: firstly, Sayyid ʿUthman aimed to remove colonial doubts about his sincerity towards the government; and, secondly, the booklet formed a prelude to his 1888 solicitation to Snouck Hurgronje for a position as a government *mufti*. Other examples of writings that Sayyid ʿUthman seemingly wrote to please the Dutch colonial establishment include his *Nasihat datang buat menegah atas menyakitkan binatang* from 1899, which he wrote to promote animal protection among the native population of the Indies, and his *Perkataan adil* from 1903, which praised Dutch colonial rule in the extreme. However, it remains the case that Sayyid ʿUthman never wrote anything that he could not justify within his understanding of Islam and he never infringed upon his personal integrity.

## 6 Conclusion

Throughout his career, Sayyid ʿUthman tirelessly and uncompromisingly devoted himself to spreading a puritan interpretation of Islam. One way to

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pursue this goal was through his many writings and these formed an important chain in the transmission of Islamic scholarship from the Middle East to the Netherlands East Indies and made Islamic scholarship in Arabic, available in Malay and in some cases in Javanese and Sundanese. Other ways of promoting his interpretation of Islam were preaching, teaching and constantly providing a personal example of an exemplary Muslim life. As far as we can judge from the sources studied in this book, his personal life utterly complied with his understanding of Islamic rules and regulations. By cooperating with the colonial government he thought that he could promote his goal of spreading a stricter adherence to Islam and he never considered this strategic association as something harmful.

In sum, we can say that Sayyid ʿUthman, through his writings, preaching, and teaching, contributed a great deal to the further Islamization of the Muslim community in the Netherlands East Indies and, in this capacity, he played a historical role in the development of Islam in that part of the world.

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# Appendix

## *Transliteration of the* Qamar al-zaman

### 1 Introductory Note

This transliteration is meant as an aid for people who do not know Jawi and have no philological pretentions. For this reason, I have kept it as simple as possible. The spelling used is the standard Indonesian orthography. At times, the spelling of a particular Malay word in the *Qamar al-zaman* does not follow the usual spelling conventions; this might have to do with the rhyme, or with the particular form of the Malay used. In most cases, I have just transliterated what the *Qamar al-zaman* gives, but on rare occasions I have indicated in a footnote what the standard reading should be.

I have not used punctuation marks, such as quotation marks, neither have I used full stops in the poem, because the end of the line is clear from the lay-out of the work. Although the Jawi script does not have capital letters, I have used them for the names of people, places and book titles. Moreover, I have put all book titles in italics. On rare occasions I have put words in a foreign language in italics. It is difficult at times to decide whether words that originate from Arabic are also common in Malay; this is because in the Jawi script the word looks the same in both languages.

Where a particular reading of the text was not obvious or needed some clarification, I have added a footnote. For the sake of easy reference, I have numbered the stanzas, and I have given the page numbers of the origional text in square brackets [].

### 2 Transliteration

[page 1 = front cover and title page]
Ini hikayat bernama *Qamar al-zaman* menyatakan keadaannya almarhum al-Habib ʿUthman dan ta'rikhnya. Terbahagi didalam dua bahagian. Mudah-mudahan menjadi *ʿibratan li-l-uli l-albab*.

Diatur oleh hamba yang daʿif Shaykh Ibn ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman ibn Yahya. Tercetak dan terjual di toko Sayyid ʿAlwi ibn ʿUthman, Kampung Petamburan, Weltevreden.

[page 2]
*bi-smi Allah al-Rahman al-Rahim*.

1 dengan nama Tuhan yang Esa
syaʿir dikarang di ini masa
bukan pengarang empunya bisa
hanya pertolongan yang Mahakuasa

2 perkataannya banyak yang janggal
seperti tebu di negeri Tegal
banyak bukunya bertenggel-tengel
isap gulanya empasnya tinggal

3 Q*amar al-zaman* nama hikayat ini
buat menerangkan sekalian ikhwani
keadaannya almarhum yang telah
fani

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pulang ke rakhmatnya Tuhan yang
Ghani

4 disini hamba mulai berwarta
ta'rikh almarhum diberi nyata
kepada ikhwan semuanya rata
supaya diketahui dengan perdata

5 dimaksudkan lafaz almarhum disini
ya'ni Habib 'Uthman yang telah fani
supaya diketahui oleh ikhwani
yang suka membaca hikayat ini

6 pada tahun satu dua tiga delapan[1]
dizahirkan almarhum di Pekojan
depan
negeri Betawi tempat derepan
segala bangsa bersampan-sampan

[page 3]

7 ayahnya 'Abd Allah ibn 'Aqil ibn
Yahya
dizahirkan di negeri yang mulia
Makka al-mukarrama disebut dia
tempat zahirnya Sayyid al-Anbiya'

8 demikian pula akan datuknya
dizahirkan di Makka juga diyanya
'Aqil ibn 'Umar ia namanya
'Umar itu dari Hadramaut asalnya

9 bundanya almarhum yang bahri
Amina bint 'Abd al-Rahman al-Misri
Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman dari Mesir
kemari
karena mengurai ilmu keliling
negeri

10 dari waktu almarhum dizahirkannya
antara tiga tahun konon lamanya
kembali pulang ayahandanya
ke negeri Makka ziyarah ahlinya

11 dari masa itu almarhum dipelihara
oleh datuknya dengan sejahtera
Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman orang Mesir
negara
yang banyak ilmunya tiada terkira[2]

12 almarhum menuntut ilmu dari
padanya
siang malam tiada hingganya
bermacam ilmu diajarkannya
beruntung almarhum dapat
warisnya

13 lain daripada dia almarhum pergi
menuntut ilmu sore dan pagi
daripada 'ulama' Melayu yang
tinggi-tinggi
dapatlah ilmu berbahagi-bahagi

14 masa sembilan belas tahun umurnya
minta idhin almarhum dari
datuknya
pergi ke Makka menyusul ayahnya
beserta hendak menyempurnakan
Islamnya

15 sesudahnya minta idhin berkali-kali
daripada datuknya orang yang asli
diberi idhin serta dibekali
segala keperluan sama sekali

16 maka berlayarlah almarhum itu
ke negeri Makka sudalah tentu[3]
mendapatkan ayahnya ada di situ
beserta sanak saudara satu persatu

1 In the margin is written: tahun 1238.

2 In the margin is written: dari guru-gurunya jadnya Shaykh 'Abd al-Rahman.

3 In the margin is written: tahun 1252.

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[page 4]

17 sesudahnya sampai di Makka negeri
berkumpul dengan ayahnya pagi sore
menuntut ilmu sehari-hari
macam-macam ilmu yang ia cari[4]

18 setelah sudah tujuh tahun lamanya
almarhum kumpul dengan sanaknya
ada tercita dalam hatinya
hendak minta idhin dari ayahnya

19 maka lalu ia gerakkan
minta idhin beserta ridakan
dari ayah dan sanak diratakan
hendak ke Hadramaut yang dimaksudkan

20 setelah dapat dari ayahnya
bangkit almarhum bersikap persedi'annya
lalu berangkat dengan senang hatinya
ke negeri Hadramaut yang dituju-kannya

21 maka adalah pada masa itu
tahun satu dua enam empatlah tentu[5]
almarhum berlayar di itu waktu
pasrah kepada Tuhan yang Satu

22 setelah sampai ia di Hadramaut
ramai orang sedia menyambut
kanan kiri semuanya rebut
girangnya jangan lagi disebut

23 bertemulah almarhum dengan beberapa 'ulama'
ahli shari'a dan haqiqa dalam agama
bangsa sayyid dan shaykh bersama-sama
penyuluh agama selama-lama

24 senanglah hatinya almarhum itu
duduk menuntut ilmu setiap waktu
siang malam sudalah tentu
dapatlah maksudnya satu per satu

25 sehingga pada masa yang ditentukan
oleh Allah ta'ala yang mejadikan
sekalian alam serta melakukan
kawin almarhum diramaikan

26 dengan isyarat daripada guru-gurunya
kawin di sana dengan sempurnanya
bersenang ia dengan sentosanya
ilmu dan adab diperolehnya

[page 5]

27 sehingga dapat beberapa putra
di negeri Hadramaut dengan sejahtera
suka hatinya terlalu masra
dengan sentosa tiada sengsara

28 maka pada suatu masa
wafat guru-gurunya yang jasa-jasa
yang mengajari ilmu senantiasa
hatinya almarhum menjadi susa[6]

29 sesudahnya mati guru-gurunya
duduk almarhum dengan mashghul-nya

4 In the margin is written: daripada guru-gurunya di Makka Sayyid Ahmad Zayni Dahlan.

5 In the margin is written: 1264.

6 In the margin is written: daripada guru-gurunya di Hadramaut al-Habib 'Abd Allah ibn Husayn ibn Zahir.

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mengenangkan guru-guru senantiasa harinya
datang pikiran dalam hatinya

30 ingin berlayar meliburkan hati
ke Makka Medina dan lain-lain seperti
sambil mencari ilmu serta pengerti
mudah-mudahan semuanya didapati

31 sesudahnya delapan tahun lamanya
duduk di Hadramaut dengan sentosanya
maka keraslah akan ʿazamnya
hendak juga sampaikan maksudnya

32 lalau berlayar dengan masanya
ke negeri Makka Medina keduanya[7]
sambil menuntut ilmu dianya
serta ziyarat asal usulnya

33 terutama ziyarat Sayyid al-Bashar
yang meshafaʿatkan ummatnya di Yawm al-Mahshar
yang mempunyai sunggai Kawthar
yang sayang ummatnya kecil dan besar

34 maka adalah pada masa itu
tahun satu dua tujuh dualah tentu[8]
taʾrikh berlayarnya di itu waktu
dari Hadramaut ia menlangkah pintu

35 setelah hasil maksud dia
daripada kedua negeri yang mulia
lalu berangkat sedaya upaya
ke negeri Mesir tanah yang kaya

36 sesudahnya sampai di negeri Mesir
menyari sanaknya sambil pelesir
ke negeri Dimyat tanahnya pasir
tempat sanaknya seperti sisir

[page 6]

37 sanaknya dari pihak bundanya
karena di sanah memang negerinya
duduk almarhum dengan sentosanya
semuanya menerima dengan senang hatinya

38 sehingga almarhum dapat dikawinkan
oleh sanaknya serta diramaikan
dengan beberapa kehormatan disediakan
senang semuanya jangan diwartakan

39 hal itu tiada dipanjangkan kalam
kembali kepada halnya siang dan malam
hanya menyari ilmu yang dalam-dalam
tiada perduli terang atau kelam

40 mendapati oleh dianya
beberapa ʿulamaʾ Mesir jago-jagonya[9]
menuntutlah ilmu sementara waktunya
dapatlah ia dengan ijazahnya

41 setelah itu ia minta permisi
dari mertua serta istri yang bersi
hendak ke negeri Maghribi karena komisi
ilmu agama minta dikasi

7 In the margin it is written: daripada guru-gurunya di Medina Shaykh Muhammad al-ʿAzab.

8 In the margin is written: 1272.

9 In the margin is written: daripada guru-gurunya di Misr Shayhk Ahmad al-Dimyati.

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42 istrinya serta sanak-sanaknya
semua terlalu susa hatinya
hendak ditahan tak dapat rasanya
apa boleh buat dipasrahkannya

43 berangkatlah almarhum dengan memaksa
hati yang lemah dikeraskan seberapa bisa
meninggalkan qurabat pasrah yang kuasa
mudah-mudahan semuanya dapat sentosa

44 dari Mesir pergi ke negeri Tunis
karena mendapati ilmu beberapa jinis
sebab sama dia suda menjadi manis
kebetulan dapat kenalan yang anis-anis

45 mereka menunjuki segala 'ulama'
masa itu Ba'sh Mufti paling utama
diqaryat Qabis dia punya ruma
perjalanan dari kota lima jam lama

46 menuntutlah almarhum daripada dianya
akan ilmu yang diperkenan olehnya
hasil semua dengan kesempurnaannya
apa-apa yang tercita dalam hatinya

[page 7]

47 didapati guru itu suka minum huqqa
kecuali almarhum bukan melaga
tetapi karena mengambil ridanya juga
melakun meniupi baranya sehingga

48 setelah itu lalu berangkat pergi
kepihak Maghribi menjajahi lagi
yang sekira-kira 'ulamanya suka membahagi
ilmu yang mulia lagi yang tinggi

49 sampai ke Marakish dan negeri Fas
sesudahnya negeri Jaza'ir ia melepas
mendapatkan ilmu yang seperti kapas
atau yang seperti telur dikupas

50 daripada 'ulama' yang jasa-jasa
arbab shari'a haqiqa diraksa[10]
daripada ahli zahir batin berlaksa
hasil maqsudnya dengan sentosa

51 sesudahnya itu berangkatlah dia
ke Stambul tempat Khalifa yang mulia
dari bandar Tanja mulai ia
naik kapal Turki ke Mirshiliya

52 setelah sampai almarhum di negeri itu
turun pelesiran sementara waktu
melihat segala 'ajaib yang di situ
bekas orang Islam dulunya tentu

53 karena dulu zaman Tabi'in
itu negeri di tangan Muslimin
kembali lagi kepada mala'in
sebab raja-raja Islam ada zalimin

54 daripada 'ajaib yang ada di situ
dilihat oleh almarhum itu
bekas satu masjid masi ada utu
setengah pekakasnya[11] pada itu waktu

10 In Sundanese and Javanese *raksa* (or *reksa*) means to protect something (thanks to Julian Millie).

11 I have read here *perkakas*.

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55 maka terus belayar ke negeri Turki
singgah di pulau Malta karena menaiki
pesisir perempuan dan laki-laki
mengambil keperluan yang nak dipakai

56 maka tiada dipanjangkan ceritanya
sampailah ke Stambul dengan selamatnya
turun di hotel Pijanji namanya
hotel orang baik-baik itu tempatnya

[page 8]
57 setelah sudah sampai di sana
sebelumnya ia pergi ke mana-mana
teringat sepotong surat yang mana
dari Basha negeri Medinah

58 kepada Sadr al-Aʿzam diantarkan
supaya ia bole pertemukan
Shaykh al-Islam yang dimaksudkan
jangan jadi sukar didapatkan

59 dengan segera surat dikeluari
lalu minta tolong orang antari
kepada Sadr al-Aʿzam akan diberi
pergi mengadap ia sendiri

60 sesudahnya itu ia mendapati
Shaykh al-Islam serta mufti[12]
minta ijazat serta pengerti
dalam agama dengan seperti

61 sesudahnya itu tiada dipanjangkan lagi
ceritanya almarhum di itu Turki
lalu berangkat ia pergi
ke negeri Shaʾm negeri yang tinggi

62 tanah yang cuci pula dia
tempat segala nabi dan awliya
tambah lagi ada batu yang mulia
qiblah ummat dahulu beserta anbiya

63 setelah sampai almarhum di situ
ziyarahlah sepuasanya hati yang matu
Bayt al-Muqaddas namanya itu
sambil menuntut ilmu yang manah ditentu

64 setelah hasil akan semuanya
pulang almarhum kepada ahlinya
negeri Hadramaut di sanah adanya
duduk lagi tujuh tahun lamanya

65 sesudahnya itu ada tercita
dalam hatinya ada berkata
ingin sekali memandang mata
negeri Betawi tempatnya beta

66 karena hati rasa tiada tahan
lalu minta idhin dari ahlinya perlahan-lahan
dengan berkata in shaʾa Allah mudah-mudahan
hamba kembali manah ditentukan Tuhan

[page 9]
67 setelah dapat idhin ahlinya itu
bersikap almarhum di itu waktu
lalu berangkat keluar pintu
menaiki unta melalukan gunung batu

68 maka sampailah di bandar Shihr
lalu menaiki kapal menjadi pasisir
terus ke Singgapura tempat bermampir

12 In the margin is written: daripada guru-gurunya di Stambul yaitu Shaykh al-Islam.

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memberi khabar ke Betawi datang-
nya hampir

69 sekalian sanaknya semua terkejut
saling berberkhabaran berkalang
kabut
setelah datang semua sedia me-
nyambut
kanan kiri semuanya rebut

70 tahun satu dua tujuh sembilan
tanggal tujuh belas hari bulan[13]
dengan ta'rikh diberanakkannya
berbetulan
bertemulah segala sanak dan andai
taulan

Bahagian yang kedua daripada
hikayat *Qamar al-zaman*
[in margin: cerita sesudahnya
sampai di Betawi]

71 dengarlah tuhan hamba berwarta
perihal almarhum diberi nyata
sesudahnya sampai di Betawi kota
duduklah ia bersukacita

72 dengan sanaknya yang manah ada
dari pihak dia punya bunda
karena datuknya sudah tiada
melainkan mereka yang me-
nyenangkan dada

73 maka kira-kira tiga bulan lamanya
dari watas pulang berlayar dianya
mulai banyak yang datang padanya
minta berlajar ilmu mereka
semuanya

74 almarhum tiada menolak
hanya maqbulkan dengan mutlak
sila sekalian janganlah 'alaq
kapan saja tuan-tuan berkehendak

75 ilmu hamba tiada semunikan
barangmanah yang hamba dapatkan
karena Allah hamba mau ajarkan
tiada berkehendak orang upahkan

[page 10]

76 maka berlajarlah mereka itu
ilmu agama satu per satu
cuma saja belum dibikin tentu
hari yang manah atau waktu

77 maka adalah pada suatu hari
datang seorang alim bahri
Haji 'Abd al-Ghani Bima namanya
peri
karena Bima asal dia punya negeri

78 berminta ia seboleh-bolehnya
supaya almarhum megantikannya
mengajar di masjid Pekojan dengan
ikhlasnya
karena ia sudah lemah badannya

79 almarhum tiada menyalahkan yang
mulia
Haji 'Abd al-Ghani daripada awliya
sebagaimana diketahui orang raya
menurut almarhum isharat dia

80 lalu almarhum mulai mengajari
sekali tiap-tiap delapan hari
banyak yang hadir kanan dan kiri
suka semuanya tiada terperi

81 maka selalu almarhum itu
mengajari orang satu per satu
menerangkan agama serta mem-
bantu
jaga keselamatan negeri tiap-tiap
waktu

13 In the margin is written: 1279.

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82 tiap-tiap ada yang berbuat sala
bangun almarhum tiada mau kala
karena menolak dia punya bahala
supaya selamat umum segala

83 terutama dalam perihal agama
segera menerangkan tiada lama
cemburunya keras tiada yang menyama
oleh karena itu kewajiban atas ‘ulama’

Kedatangan bencana yang pertama kali pada tahun 1283
[in margin: budak mengaku sayyid jual ‘azimat]

84 ada pada suatu kutika
datang seorang bangsa Aprika
bekas budak sudah merdeka
datangnya dari negeri Makka

[page 11]
85 turun di Surabaya lalu ke Betawi
karena membodohi orang-orang Jawi
mengaku sayyid bangsa Zawawi
menjual ‘azimat membodo’i

86 lalu banyak orang percaya
pada minta air penawar dari dia
pada hal ia suatu buaya
datang kemari membikin pedaya

87 kalau ia sujud lama sekali
supaya orang sangkakan wali
pada hal ia pantat kuali
harus digutung ceburkan di kali

88 lalau orang mengatur sembah
kepada almarhum terabah-rabah
mengetakan karamat datang menyabuh
banyak orang datang menyembah

89 dengan segera almarhum mendapati
lalu ia periksa dengan teliti
setelah sudah diamat-amati
teringat almarhum dengan yang pasti

90 bahwa ia budaknya bangsa Zawawi
ketika ia di Makka sering dia ketemui
di rumah tuhannya yang diketahui
sekarang sudah datang di Betawi

91 Murja’an namanya ia itu
berkata almarhum hai Murja’an
kenapa begitu
bikin pedaya orang di ini waktu
tiada kautakut Tuhan yang Satu

92 aku ketahui engkau ma‘tuqnya Zawawi
kutika ini membuat balaui
kau sangka bodoh semua orang Jawi
segera taubat jangan sampai dibawai

93 lalu almarhum pergi meraput
Si Murja’an dibawa oleh sekawut
digisi mulutnya giginya copot
dikirim pulang ke barat-barat laut

Kedatangan bencana yang kedua kali pada tahun 1288
[in margin: budak mengaku bangsa Shaybi]

[page 12]
94 tiada ada beberapa lamanya
datang lagi lebih aneh daripadanya
tersangat-sangat akan rupanya
halnya berpura-pura dengan pokalnya

95 mangaku bangsa Shaybi akan dirinya
yang memegang kunci Ka‘bah ia dianya

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pada hal bangsa Zanji budak asalnya
peranakan Makkah cuma haqiqatnya

96 berkata pada orang-orang bahwa sesunggu
Ka'bah itu sudah dekat rubu
bagaimana jika tiada dibikin tegu
tentu qiamat dunya menjadi kelabu

97 marilah kita bertolong-tolongan
mendermakan kita punya pandangan
sama uang jangan sayang-sayangan
jangan sampai kita berkambangan[14]

98 banyak orang pada terkena
mengeluarkan uang dengan sempurna
tersiar khabarnya kemana-mana
hingga sampai kepada walidna

99 lalu ia melepas mata-mata
dari Petamburan pergi ke Kota
lihat betul-betul dengan perdata
dengarkan apa dia punya kata

100 setelah sudah mata-mata melihat
dapat nyata orang itu jahat
segera kembali dengan lah cepat
mekhabarkan almarhum bagaimana didapat

101 lalu almarhum pergi mendapati
setelah sampai lalu diper'ati
tidak tempo lagi lalu dicamati
setengah hidup setengah mati

102 kemudian itu lalu pergi mekhabarkan
kepada pemerintah negeri diwartakan
supaya itu orang disegerahkan
kirim ke negerinya jangan ditinggalkan

103 karena ia membodoi orang orang
urf dan agama jahatnya terang
boleh menjadi mengajari perang
menjatuhi yang bodo pada yang terlarang

[page 13]
104 sebab dia datang dari Makkah
tentu orang menjadi suka
apa katanya tentu tiada disangka
justa atau bikin durhaka

105 lalau pemerintah mengirim pulang
ke negeri Makkah tempat si jalang
jangan sampai dapat mengulang
membodohi segala orang talang

106 maka selalu almarhum menerangkan
hukum agama serta mengajarkan
dalam dua masjid mengunjungkan
Pekojan kampung besar disertakan

107 kampong besar Pasar Senin
dengan permintaan Haji 'Abd al-Mu'in
daripada 'ulama' lagi pun wanin
perkara agama sangat menaru 'ayn

108 oleh karena almarhum jalannya lempang
jadi pemerintah tiada selimpang
agama tiada boleh dibikin gampang
salah buatan lantas diserampang

Kedatangan bencana yang kedua kali pada tahun 1295
[in margin: wali keramat palsu]

14 Julian Millie suggests to read here *kambang*, which in Sundanese can also mean 'to submit oneself to.'

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109 ada pada suatu waktu
datang lagi yang semacam itu
satu sayyid anak amat tentu
mangaku keramat terlalu matu

110 pada hal macam si paman juga
luar mas dalam tembaga
kalau orang lihat dia punya laga
tentu sekali tiada menduga

111 serbannya besar seperti dulang
siwaknya panjang bukan kepalang
pandai sekali menjadi dalang
tambahan tesbinya seperti jembalang

112 jika ia ada di segala mahajana
tempat baca mawlid pukul rebana
berpura-pura tawajud si mawlana
mau jatukan dirinya ke tana

[page 14]
113 jika ia mulai bergoyang-goyang
banyak yang sedia dia punya melayang
masing-masing pegangkan terlalu sayang
tambah mengikut si perayu mayang

114 setelah sampai khabar kepada pak tua
lalu mengundang menyuru bawa
tuan keramat yang seperti kawa-kawa
yang manah melihat tentu ketawa

115 karena mau dilihat si mawlana
kutika tawajud jatu ketana
sedia almarhum dengan sempurna
persediahan mawlid pukul rebana

116 kata almarhum jangan sekali-kali
ada yang memegangkan yang mengaku wali
ketika bergoyang jangan ditoli
biarkan dia jatu sama sekali

117 maka orang baca hikayat mawlid
maka mulai sedikit si paman kalut
lalu diatur nasi dan pulut
dan lain makanan yang lezat di mulut

118 kata almarhum kalau betul tawajudnya
tentu ia tiada ingat kanan kirinya
sekalipun jatuh akan dirinya
di atas makanan yang diaturkannya

119 maka kalau palsulah dia
tentu memili sedaya upaya
tempat yang sela akan supaya
menaru tangannya jangan berbahaya

120 maka sangatlah dia punya goyang
pura-pura dia akan melayang
setelah melihat tiada ada yang sayang
lalu jatukan diri mengerayang

121 mengerayang memili tempat
karena menaru tangan dengan cepat
akhirnaya jadi belah ketupat
seperti orang jatu ke sumpat

122 surbannya jatu ke dalam kua
siwaknya mantul kena orang tua
ramai orang ketawa-tawa
malu sekali si kawa-kawa

[page 15]
123 lalu almarhum pergi meminta
daripada keadilan pemerinta
bahwa itu orang yang jahat nyata
supaya dikirim pulang semata-mata.

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Kedatangan bencana yang keempat
kali pada tahun 1303
[in margin: tarekat palsu]

124 ada pada suatu masa
bahaya tarekat terbit di segala desa
daripada guru-guru yang baru bisa
baca alif, ba', ta', tha'

125 berkehendak mereka itu
tiada yang lain melainkan yang satu
pengisi kantung sudalah tentu
supaya hasil lezat yang sewaktu

126 setengah daripada guru tarekat
mengajarkan murid yang kena
kepikat[15]
semua masing-masing mufakat
melawan pemerintah berjingkat-
jingkat

127 ada pula setengah dari mereka
mengajarkan muridnya tiap kutika
menahan segala barang yang disuka
daging dan telur serta nikah

128 banyak yang turut terlalu amat
semua membeli dia punya jimat
supaya bisa menahan himmat
shahwat yang ada supaya mat

129 lalu almarhum menerangkan
bahwa agama Islam tiada larangkan
tiap-tiap ni'mat yang disediakan
disuru masing-masing gunakan

130 didalam beberapa kitab yang
dikarangnya
daripada itu *al-Wathiqa al-wafiyya*
namanya
disitu dapat diketahui salahnya
guru-guru tarekat semacam itu
ajarannya

131 patut dinamakan guru tarik ikat
bukannya guru tarekat
lantaran pada hak tiada mufakat
harus datingkap seperti pukat

[page 16]
Kedatangan bencana yang kelima
kali pada tahun 1309
[in margin: mengaku mimpi pada
hal justa]

132 ada pada suatu zaman lagi
datang bencana pula yang sebahagi
terbit daripada munafiq yang rugi
mengaku khadim Rawda yang Tinggi

133 bahwa ia membawa segala cerita
ia mimpi yang telah nyata
berwasiat akan Nabi kita
supaya ia siarkan warta

134 bahwa dunya ini akan qiamat
segera bilang aku punya ummat
mesti puasa tiga hari tamat
akan diangkat sepuluh macam
ni'mat

135 macam-macam lagi membawa justa
tiada takut Tuhan semata-mata
berani membawa demikian warta
yang dinasabkan kepada Nabi kita

136 maka lalu almarhum menolak
beserta menjustakan dengan mutlak
dengan menyatakan nas-nas yang
telak

15 According to Julian Millie the *ke*-prefix is commonly used for a passive contruction in Sundanese.

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jangan sampai ummat Muhammad
terkena melak-melak[16]

137 didalam satu kitab menyatakan dia
yang diberi nama *Nasihat al-murdiy-ya*
disitulah dapat diketahui paya[17]
si pembohong mengaku ruyah

Kedatangan bencana yang keenam kali pada tahun 1314
[in margin: orang-orang makan renten[18]]

138 tiada berapa lama pada pendapatan
bahaya orang banyak memakan renten
lalu almarhum memberi ingatan
bagi mereka hantu dan setan

139 dengan mengarang beberapa kitab yang lebat
harap kalau-kalau mereka dapat bertobat
menyatakan bahwa itu sebesar-besar musibat
bukan perbuatan ummat ijabat

[page 17]

140 daripada kitab yang karang perihal riba
*Bunnat al-jalis* namanya tiada diruba
terhias dengan dalil-dalil seperti kahraba
yakni lampu listrik dari Urubba

Kedatangan bencana yang ketujuh kali pada tahun 1319
[in margin: penghulu melanggar hukum shar‘]

141 tiada lama lagi datang musibat
perihal menetapkan puasa sebelum-nya ru’yat
daripada penghulu yang kesambat
tiada perduli membawa maksiat

142 berkehendak ia bermuka-muka
supaya dipuji atau disuka
tiada percaya akan dapat naraka
asal saja dapat buah mendalika

143 lalau sampai itu perkhabaran
dari Kota datang ke Petamburan
di waktu itu almarhum memaran
penghulu itu diberi ajaran

144 maka pada hari jum‘atnya
kebetulan itu hari yang ditepatkan-nya
pergi almarhum dengan segeranya
ke masjid Pekojan meminum diyanya

145 maka dilihat oleh sekalian orang
semuanya turut minum tiada yang larang
sakit hatinya penghulu yang curang
hawa nafsunya dapat diparang

146 begitulah perbuatan setengah penulu
yang da‘if imannya terlalu-lalu
asal saja dapat yang ia perlu
tiada perduli takut dan malu

147 lalu almarhum memberi nyata
di dalam satu kitab dengan perdata
perihal ru’yat bulan semata-mata
dengan segala gambar bulan ada terpeta

16 Julian Millie suggests that *melak* has to be understood as *pelak*.

17 This word is unclear.

18 From the Dutch *rente*, interest.

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148 T*amyiz al-haqq min al-dalal*
namanya
lalu disiarkan oleh dianya
bagi umum supaya diketahuinya
jangan sampai keliru orang semuanya.

[page 18]
Kedatangan bencana yang kedelapan kali pada tahun 1321
[in margin: mau bikin agama baru]

149 pada suatu dawasa terbit bahaya
daripada seorang penganiaya
mengarang suatu kitab buat padaya
*Ilmu peyakinan* dinamakan dia

150 maksudnya akan bikin binasa
agama Islam dikuliling desa
menyangka dirinya terlalu bisa
merusakkan agama Tuhan yang Esa

151 sebetulnya ia menjadi pengulu
di Bandung sebelah ulu
ibarat padi si padi bulu
yang mana makan ulati mendalu

152 sebetulnya ini agama tuhan yang esa
jangan sekali diganggu atau dibinasa
laksana barang ada berbisa
membinasakan diri nanti dirasa

153 lihatlah kisahnya raja Abraha itu
yang berkehendak yang jahat tentu
mau merubuhkan Ka'ba di itu waktu
dengan gajah hitam seperti hantu

154 maka lihat akibatnya bagaimana
dengan pertolongan Tuhan Mawlana
Abraha dan sekalian ra'yatnya
musna
hancur lebur masuk kedalam tanah

155 dilontar oleh segala burung Ababil
sekalian ra'yatnya dengan batu sinjil
bertumpak-tumpak semacam
rumput gambil[19]
tama'a asalnya akhirnya menjadi
ganjil

156 maka lalu almarhum pergi menangtangi
ke negeri Bandung mengunjungi
terus ke rumahnya pengulu
mendatangi
untung tak dapat si jahat perangi

157 lalu pergi dengan hujjat yang
terkandung
ke rumahnya yang mulia Rekhin
Bandung
demikian pula tiada ada di gedung
pergi keluar negeri karena berlindung

[page 19]
158 maka lalu mengarang almarhum itu
satu kitab namanya tentu
*Sawn al-din* menyatakan di situ
beberapa kesalahatannya itu hantu

Kedatangan bencana yang kesembilan kali pada tahun 1325
[in margin: perbuatan yang bersalahan pada hukum]

159 tiada beberapa lama dari itu
kesudahan
yang membuat dosa kepada Tuhan
datang lagi yang bersalahan
membaca mawlid gambus kesudahan

160 dibuat alasan karena membaca
mawlid
pada halnya membuat kalut

19 In stead of *gambil*, *gambir* gives a better meaning.

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hanya karena memuaskan hati dan mulut
tandak menari terlalu ribut

161 manakah boleh mendapat pahala
jika membaca mawlid campur main gila
dikata perbuatan awliya akan segala
jauhnya bumi dengan tujuh petala

162 lalu menerangkan oleh almarhum
kesalahan mereka sekalian umum
yang hadir di situ makan dan minum
bersekutu mereka di dalam hukum

163 haram sekalian perbuatan mereka
yang mustahiq dapat siksa naraka
karena perbuatan itu amat durhaka
mewariskan Tuhan empunya murka

164 mengarang almarhum beberapa macam
kitab-kitab yang penuh segala ancam
daripada ayat dan hadith yang kejam
seperti pedang yang sangat tajam

165 daripada kitab yang dikarang olehnya
yaitu *Ihda' al-fawa'id* namanya
ada terisi demikian itu di dalamnya
lihat olehmu dapat kenyataannya

Kedatangan bencana yang kesepuluh kali pada tahun 1329
[in margin: fitnah kaum Wahhabi]

[page 20]

166 Pada suatu tempo telah berlompat
musibah ada datang mendapat
dari Mesir datangnya cepat
koran *al-Manar* jahat mengumpat

167 pengarang daripada Dajjal dianya
adapun artinya Dajjal pada asalnya
ya'ni yang mencampur salah dengan benarnya
mengelirukan orang-orang dengan dianya

168 tempo itu almarhum dekat wafat
tetapi masih ia mendapat
menolak itu bahaya dengan ma'rifat
supaya ummat Muhammad jangan kesumpat

169 menerangkan *al-Manar* bermadhhab Wahhabi
yang berani menjustakan Nabi
yang jahatnya terlebi-lebi
daripada segala kafir yang harbi

170 pengarang *al-Manar* itu ada mengetahui
bahwa pemimpin orang-orang di tanah Jawi
yaitu sayyid-sayyid bangsa Ba 'Alawi
ikutan ahl hadr dan badawi

171 lalu mengirim *al-Manar* korannya
yang ada tercampur salah dengan benarnya
menrancukan ia dengan pandainya
yang benarkan akan disamarkannya

172 kepada sayyid-sayyid lebih dahulu dikirimkan
mereka itu hendak dirusakkan
supaya orang negeri nanti gemarkan
lantaran sayyid-sayyid sudah memulakan

173 banyak sayyid-sayyid yang terkena pedaya
sehingga sampai memaki-maki awliya

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beserta Sahabat Nabi yang mulia-mulia
dari fitnahnya sejahat-jahat manusia

174 membawakan cerita oleh dia
perangnya Bani Hashim dengan Bani Umayya
supaya sayyid-sayyid buang tempo sia-sia
berabut pipisan kosong berpaya-paya

175 lalu almarhum segera menolak
mekafirkan kaum Wahhabi dengan mutlak
didalam beberapa kitab hujjat yang telak
supaya sayyid-sayyid sembuh daripada pilak

[page 21]
176 maka daripada kitab-kitab yang dikarang
*Fasl al-khitab* namanya terang
*I'anat al-mustarshidin* juga berbarang
serta *Salamat al-Muslimin* daripada borang

177 buat meselamatkan orang-orang Muslimin
daripada fitnahnya orang mala'in
yang menjatuhkan Muslim dan mukmin
kedalam kolam mubtadi'in

178 inilah peri keadaannya almarhum tentu
pada masa hidupnya selalu begitu
menerangkan agama setiap waktu
menolak segala bahaya semacam itu

179 hakikatnya seperti suatu pelita
menerangkan kebajikan bagi rata-rata
sebab itulah banyak yang cinta
rakyat sekalian serta pemerinta

180 dengan itu sebab lantarannya
almarhum mendapat tanda kehormatannya
*Nederlandse Leeuw* dikurniakannya
oleh maharaja Belanda dengan sejahteranya

181 hal ini tiada dipanjangkan
sebab sudah orang-orang ketahui-kan
dibawa ini akan diceritakan
akhir umurnya almarhum ada memesankan

182 berati-atilah kamu sekalian
kemudian wafatku banyak akan kejadian
fitnah dalam agama berkian-kian
jaga baik-baik jangan kelalaian

183 macam-macam Dajjal akan datang
merusakkan agama siang dan petang
mehalalkan yang haram seperti binatang
meharamkan yang halal tiadalah pantang

184 jahukanlah kamu empunya diri
kepada mereka jangan hampiri
pembujuk mereka jangan gemari
sekalipun mereka tandak menari

185 jangan juga kamu hiraukan
apa kelakuan mereka kamu biarkan
mudah-mudahan tuan binasahkan
tiada kekal mereka melakukan

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[page 22]
186 penbujuk mereka terlalu halus
berani mereka mengeluarkan fulus
supaya maksud mereka menjadi lulus
dari itu jangan sampai kamu kajeblus[20]

187 maka tiada berapa lama lagi masanya
sakitlah almarhum akan dianya
tiga bulan konon lamanya
lalu kembali ke rahmat Tuhannya

188 setelah wafat almarhum ia
gelap rasanya tanah Hindia
semacam dia dicari paya
buat menolak segala bahaya

189 segala bahaya dalam agama
bahaya dunya juga bersama
sekalipun ada tapi tak sama
semacam dia empunya tali kama

190 maka sesudahnya almarhum dimandikan
lalu orang-orang datang menyembahyangkan
sesudahnya itu semua mengantarkan
banyaknya orang tak dapat ditentukan

191 lebih kurang dari lima ribu orang
yang mengiring jinaza jalan berbarang
selaku orang mau pergi perang
penuh sesak susah dilarang

192 hadir semua miskin dan kaya
polisi amtenar ada sedia
mengantar jinaza yang termulia
tidak perduli susah dan paya

193 betapa lagi segala 'ulama'
mengiring mereka paling utama
tahlil dan salawat ada bersama
diucap oleh mereka semua

194 setelah mayyit sudah dikuburkan
sesudahnya jaga ditalkinkan
bangun Sayyid 'Ali mengingatkan
sekalian yang hadir suru dengarkan

195 peringatan yang menasabah lagi kebajikan
segala pengaruhnya almarhum disebutkan
yang menyedihkan hati diwartakan
sekalian yang hadir banyak kenangkan

[page 23]
196 kemudian bangun seorang daripada 'ulama'
Sayyid Muhammad ibn 'Abd al-Rahman dia punya nama
mengingatkan pula bersama-sama
yang menasabah pada adat dan agama

197 menyebut almarhum punya kebajikan
yang semacam dia sukar didapatkan
supaya sekalian ingat doakan
mudah-mudahan dosanya Tuhan ampunkan

20 I owe the reading *kejeblus* to Julian Millie, who refers to Eringa, *Soendaas-Nederlands woordenboek*, 329.

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198 sesudahnya itu kembalilah semua-
nya
masing-masing pulang ke rumahnya
dengan kesedihan hati akan rasanya
kehilangan seorang ketuahnya

199 tammatlah cerita almarhum ini
dihinggakan sampai di sini
haraplah hamba daripada ikhwani
bacakan *fatiha* dengan *ta'anni*

200 adapun tarikh wafatnya itu
di bawa ini disebut satu persatu
masanya tanggal berapa yang tentu
bulannya tahunnya beserta waktu

201 di malam ithnayn itulah wafatnya
jam tiga malam itu waktunya
dua puluh dua safar bulannya
satu tiga tiga dua tahunnya[21]

maka sebeginilah hamba empunya pendapatan tentang keadaannya hal dan tarikhnya almarhum Habib ʿUthman ibn ʿAbd Allah ibn Yahya jua adanya.

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21 In the margin is written: 1333.

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When Sayyid 'Uthman was granted an official position within the administration in 1891, the title he received was that of Honorary Advisor for *Arab* Affairs and this title was deliberately chosen to avoid the impression among the population that Sayyid 'Uthman was appointed to deal with *Muslim* affairs. This would not have been in line with the government policy of religious neutrality and avoiding interference in religious matters. Consequently, Sayyid 'Uthman received his monthly allowance behind closed doors. Sayyid 'Uthman himself took an ambivalent position on the issue of the religious neutrality of the state. As we have seen, on the one hand, he was praising the government for not interfering in Muslim affairs; on the other hand, he also wanted the government to play a very active role in religious life. To illustrate this latter point I mention two examples here. Firstly, he was very happy that the government contributed financially to the religious infrastructure of the Muslim population in the form of salaries for religious functionaries and subsidies for mosques. Indeed, he was keen to expand this, as his plea for government subsidies for cemeteries demonstrated. Secondly, he was also of the opinion that the government should enforce particular regulations. An example of this was his call on the government to forbid the playing of the lute and to obstruct a mass gathering for the celebration of the birthday of the Prophet, because this particular event was only meant to elicit money from the people.[4] Of course, Sayyid 'Uthman's interpretation of his position of Advisor as State *mufti*, was not shared by the administration, but occasionally some of his religious publications were facilitated by government subsidies, albeit secretly. Although Sayyid 'Uthman undoubtedly would have liked to play a more public role within the government, it is clear that he was very proud of the position he held within the administration until the end of his life and that he thought that this position added to his own effectiveness as a religious leader.